

THE
Main QUESTION
OF THE
GOSPEL CATECHISM,
What think ye of Christ?

BEING

The SUBSTANCE of some SERMONS on
MATTH. XXII. 42. preached at PORTMOAK,
Etc. on a Sacramental Occasion, Aug. 22d
1725.

BY

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the Gospel at Dumferline.

ACTS iv. II.

*This is the Stone which was set at nought by you Builders,
which is become the Head of the Corner.*

A NEW EDITION Corrected.

GLASGOW.

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Main QUESTION

O F T H E

GOSPEL CATECHISM.

MATTH. XXII. 42. *What think ye of Christ?*

MY Friends, if ye have any Regard to the Voice of the Son of God, speaking to you in this Text; then, to be sure, the Application of it is begun, before ever we come to the Explication of it. And indeed, if the Lord himself would open and apply it to you, you would see more in it than we can tell you. Perhaps many here, when the Minister reads his Text, turn up their Bibles, and put a Mark upon the Place of Scripture; Very well, but then they think there is the Minister's Text, and so no more of it, as if it were only the Minister's Concern, or at most, that it is only the Minister's Business to speak to his Text, and their Business to hear what he says. But, my Friends, you would know, that you have here more than a Text, and it is my Business at the Time, not only to read you a Text, but to ask you a Question; and I cannot refuse any Text without proposing it, *What think ye of Christ?* And it is your Business, not only to hear seriously what is said, but to answer solemnly before God what is asked, namely, *What think ye of Christ?* If you take it up simply as my Text, you will think yourselves little concerned with it; but if you apprehend it as Christ's Question to you, then your Concern is great: It is not my Question only, but as Christ proposed it to the Pharisees

Pharisees here : so your Hearing it repeated to you in Christ's Name, and from his Word, makes it his Question to you, *What think ye of Christ?* At such Solemnities as this, you have Occasion to hear much of Christ; but now the Question is, *What think ye of Christ, of whom you hear so much?* Many, the more they hear of Christ, the less they think of him; like *Israel*, when they had the Manna so plentifully rained down about their Tent-doors, they thought very little of it: But Wo will be to you, who hear much of Christ, and yet think little or nothing of him. If any Man love not our Lord Jesus Christ, says the Apostle, if he hath no Esteem of him, let him be *Anathema Maran-atha*. If you have the Sacramental Supper in View, you know Christ hath ordered you to search and try before-hand, saying, *Let a Man examine himself, and so let him eat*: And now, if you would examine to Purpose, I cannot see a more short and substantial Question in all the Bible, to try yourselves by, than this is, *What think ye of Christ?* Solomon says, *Prov. xxiii. 7. As a Man thinketh in his Heart, so is he*; where he declares the Man's State to be according as the Thoughts of his Heart go. Now, so it is here; truly according as you think in your Heart, especially concerning Christ, so are you, and so is your State in God's Sight: According as you think highly and duly of Christ or not, so are you either a gracious or a graceless Man, either a Believer or Unbeliever, either a Man fit to go to a Communion-table or not; and therefore enquire into it, *What think ye of Christ?* The Trial here comes to a narrow Point, wherein God only can be the Witness, who will be the Judge. You may deceive Men with your Words and Works, which is all we have to know you by: But here you are called to try yourselves by your Thoughts, before that God that searches the Heart, and sees the Thought, *What think ye of Christ?*

The Occasion of Christ's propounding this Question, was this. The Pharisees had proposed several Questions to him concerning the Law, by which they thought

to have exposed him, while they did but expose themselves; particularly from *Verse 15.* and downward, thinking to intangle him, they sent forth their Disciples with the *Herodians*, saying, *Master, what thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give Tribute to Caesar or not? what is lawful? or, what says the Law concerning this?* Christ answers the Question to their Astonishment and Confusion. Again, from *Verse 23.* and downward, the *Saducees*, who denied the Resurrection, come to him with a Question on that Head; and they start a Difficulty out of the Law of *Moses*, which they thought was irreconcilable with the Doctrine of the Resurrection: But Christ answers that also, and puts them to Silence. Again afterwards, from *Verse 34.* and downward, the *Pharisees* finding that the *Saducees* were silenced by him, they gather together their Forces to puzzle and tempt him; and one of them, that was a Lawier, comes with another Question to him, saying, *Master, what is the great Commandment in the Law?* Now, they having asked so many Questions at him, and he having answered them all, it was Time for him to ask them a Question; and he does it while they are gathered together in Confederacy against him; tho' their Forces were unite, and every one present to help another, yet he puzzles them; for God delights to baffle his Adversaries, and conquer his Enemies, when they think themselves strongest, and have all the Advantages they can desire. Now, Christ asked them a Question, which they could easily answer: It was a Question in their own Catechism. What think ye of Christ? And whose Son is he? They answer truly according to Scripture, That he was the Son of *David*. This they were taught, from *Psal. lxxxix. 35, 36.* and several other Places, shewing, That the *Messias* was to be the Seed of *David*, the Rod out of the Stem of *Jesse*. But now Christ starts a Difficulty upon their Answer, which they could not easily answer; nay, which silenced them, and all that sought Occasion against him, *Ver. 43, 44. 45.* If Christ be *David's* Son, how then is he *David's* Lord? Christ did

did not hereby intend to insnare them as they did him, but to instruct them in a necessary Truth which they were to believe, namely, that the expected *Messias* is God as well as Man, *David's* Lord as well as *David's* Son, and so both the Root and Offspring of *David*, Rev. xxii. 16. Now, herein they were puzzled, and put to Silence. Many are proud of their Knowledge, because they can answer some Questions of their Catechism, as the *Pharisees* here did in general; but yet they have Reason to be ashamed of their Ignorance: For when the Question is opened up, they cannot confirm the Truth which they affirm, nor reconcile one Truth with another, no more than the *Pharisees* here could; by which it was evident, that tho' they answered, yet they did not understand his Question, which he proposed, (1.) More generally, What think ye of Christ the *Messias*? (2.) More particularly, Whose Son is he? It is the Question, as proposed in general, that I confine my self unto, yet not excluding the other Branch of it, as the Subject may bring it in. When Christ proposed this Question to the *Pharisees*, *What think ye of Christ?* No doubt they reckoned their Thoughts of the *Messias* were very sound and right every Way, while they thought he was the Son of *David*; but, like the damnably deluded *Arian* Doctors of our Day, they did not think so highly of him, as to apprehend him to be the Son of God; they did not think so honourably of him, as to own his being the supreme God, equal with the Father; for all their Knowledge, there was more in that Question than they understood, What think ye of Christ?

The *Pharisees* had asked Christ several Questions concerning the Law, and the great Precept of the Law; and now it was fit that Christ should ask them a Question concerning the great Promise of the Gospel: They were so taken up with the Law, they had no Thought of the Gospel; they thought so much of *Moses*, that they had no Thought of Christ; therefore says he, What think ye of Christ? Many are so full of the Law, that they forget him, who is the End of the Law for Righteousness

teousness to every One that believeth. Here is a Question to check the Pride of Legalists, *What think ye of Christ?* There is a Depth in every Place of Scripture, which though it seems to be very plain to the carnal Eye, yet the spiritual Depth thereof cannot be founded without the Help of the Spirit of God: There is also a great Depth in this Question; Angels cannot sound the Depth thereof, they pry into it, and cannot think enough of Christ; they can never think too much of him: And what shall Men say in answer to it, *What think ye of Christ?*

To divide this Text too critically, would, I suppose, be the Way to confuse it; but I think every Word of it hath an Emphasis therein. 1. There is an Emphasis in the interrogative Particle *What*, *What think ye of Christ?* what Place do you give him? what Value do you put upon him? what Grandeur and Glory do you ascribe to him? what Esteem have you of him? And so, 2. There is an Emphasis in the Verb *think*: Some think not of him at all, God and Christ is not in all their Thoughts; some think meanly, some think basely, some think dishonourably, some think hardly of him: But what think ye? what is your Judgment of Christ? what is your Opinion of him? what is your Sentiment of him? what is your Apprehension of him? how stand you affected towards him? and what Consideration have you of him? 3. There is an Emphasis in the Pronoun *ye*: What think ye of Christ? ye *Pharisees* and *Sadducees*, what think ye of Christ? ye that are so busy in starting Questions about the Law, what think ye of Christ the End of the Law? ye Legalists and self-righteous Persons, what think ye of Christ? Yea, tho' it was put to the *Pharisees* in particular, yet it concerns all in general. The trying-Question that is proposed for the Conviction of Hypocrites, and to find them out, is useful for the Consolation and Confirmation of Believers, and for discovering their Uprightness. While the Daughters of *Jerusalem* think no more of Christ than of another Beloved,

loved, saying, *What is thy Beloved more than another?* The Spouse of Christ thinks him to be the *Chief among Ten Thousand*. Therefore it comes to you all, What think ye of Christ, Believers and Unbelievers? Surely to them that believe he is precious. 4. There is an Emphasis in the Object or Matter of the Question, *Christ*: what think ye of Christ? what think ye of the *Messias*? what think ye of the Anointed of God, the Christ of God? It is remarkable, Christ says not here, what think ye of me? but, what think ye of Christ? that is, God's Anointed, and the *Messias* promised to the Fathers: And hereby it is intimate to us, That as Christ loves to magnify his Office, as the Sent, and Sealed, and Anointed of God; so we cannot have right and becoming Thoughts of him, unless we apprehend him in his saving Offices, to which he is authorized of the Father: And so, when he says not, What think ye of me? but, What think ye of Christ? he does not simply commend himself, but his Father also, who anointed him to that Office; and himself, as bearing his Father's Commission, and invested with his Authority to save Sinners: What think ye of Christ? Here is the proper Object of the Esteem of rational Creatures, and especially Mankind Sinners, on whom their Thoughts ought to be terminate. It is not, What think ye of God absolutely considered? for God out of Christ is a consuming Fire. It is not, What think ye of *Moses*? You magnify *Moses* and the Law; but a greater than *Moses* is here, even he by whom the Law is magnified and made honourable. It is not, What think ye of Ministers and their Sermons? O they are nothing but the Image of Death without him; but the Question is, What think ye of Christ? The Word itself is but a dead Letter without Christ. It is a remarkable Saying that Christ hath to that same Purpose, *John v. 39. 40. Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal Life, and they are they that testify of me: And ye will not come to me that ye might have Life.* You think you have eternal Life in the Scripture, but the Scripture testifies of

of me ; yet ye will not come unto me, tho' the Scripture testifies that eternal Life is only to be had in me. Christ is the true God and eternal Life, 1 John v. 20. And this is the Record, that God hath given us eternal Life, and this Life is in his Son, v. 11. Seeing then that the Scripture testifies of Christ, that eternal Life is in him ; in vain do men think to have eternal Life, even in the Scripture, while they will not come to Christ, that they may have Life. People may think respectfully of the Scripture, and yet perish in their Ignorance, and die in a Delusion, while they do not think respectfully of Christ, in a Suitableness to the Testimony that the Scripture gives of him ; Therefore the great Question is still, What think ye of Christ ?

OBSERV. *That the great Question of the Christian Catechism, by which People are to try themselves, is this, What think ye of Christ ?*

Here you see, Christ, who is the Catechist that puts the Question, is also the Catechism, the Matter of the Question. It is to this same Purpose that Christ demands an Answer to this Question, both with respect to the People in general, what they thought of Christ ; and also with respect to the Disciples themselves, what they thought of him, Luke ix. 18, 19, 20. *Whom say the People that I am ?* What is the Sentiment and Opinion of the People about Christ ? It is answered for the People, That some took him for John the Baptist, some for Elias, some for one of the old Prophets : They had an Esteem of Christ, but not according to his Worth and Excellency, his Grandeur and Glory. Well, but says Christ to his Disciples, *Whom say ye that I am ?* What is your Thought and Judgment ? Peter answers in the Name of the rest, saying, *Thou art the Christ of God.* Believers only can answer this Question to Purpose, what think ye of Christ ?

The Method which I would here essay, as the Lord may assist, to prosecute shall be, 1. To premise some general Remarks for clearing of this Doctrine. 2. To shew what is the Import of this Question in the several Parts thereof. 3. Offer some Reasons of the Doctrine, shewing why this is the leading and trying Question in the Christian Catechism. 4. Deduce some Inferences, and so make Application of the Point, for informing of our Minds, trying of our State, and directing of our Thoughts and Affections concerning Christ.

FIRST HEAD.

The *first* Head proposed is, To offer some general Remarks for clearing of the Doctrine.

1st Remark, That Man is a thoughtful or a thinking Creature. God created him with a thinking Faculty, capable of discursive Thought and Ratiocipation; capable of rational Cogitation concerning God, and spiritual Objects, and celestial Things; which Beasts, that have some Sort of Thoughts, yet are not capable of. I need not insist upon this; for some of you know, that even Pagan Philosophers are acquaint with this, and that Heathen Poets have inferred it from the very Frame and Structure of the Humane Body; as Ovid.

*Pronaque cum spectent Animalia cætera terram,
Os Homini sublime dedit: Cælumque tueri
Jussit, & erectos ad sidera tollere vultus.*

Man was endowed above Beasts with a Faculty capable of celestial Contemplation. It is peculiar to the Creatures called Men and Angels, to think of God, and to think of Christ; other Creatures are not capable of such Thoughts: This is plainly supposed in this Question, *What think ye of Christ?*

2^d Remark, That Man's Thoughts, together with all the Faculties and Powers of his Soul, have gotten such a Dash by the Fall of Adam, that they were set a wavering after other Objects besides God the chief

Good:

Good : Yea, the Fall in a Manner dash'd out his Brains ; and his Head being broken, God went out of his Head, and the Creature came in. Since that Time, he could never have a right Thought of God in his Head, yea, *God is not in all his Thoughts ;* but innumerable other Things fill up the Room which God should have. He created Man upright, but they have found out many Inventions, insomuch that now *every Imagination of the Thought of his Heart is only Evil continually,* Gen. vi. 5. The World, and the Lusts thereof, do monopolize and ingross all the Thoughts of the Children of Men, and God is thrust out of them ; there is no Room for God or the Son of God. This wrong Sett of the Thoughts is also here supposed in the Question, *What think ye of Christ ?*

3d Remark, That whatever confused Thoughts and dark Apprehensions Men may naturally have, now in their fallen State, concerning God and his Law, like the confused Chaos, Gen. 1. 2. *Without Form and void, and Darkness upon the Face of the Deep ;* yet Thoughts of Christ, or of God in Christ, are what no Man could ever have had in the least glimmering Idea by Nature, without Divine Gospel-revelation. *Adam* fallen retained some awful and terrible Thoughts of God ; but no Thought could he ever had of Christ, unless God had revealed him as the Seed of the Woman that was to bruise the Head of the Serpent. This is the Mystery that was hid from Ages and Generations. The great Mystery of Godliness, *God manifested in the Flesh, God in Christ reconciling the World to himself,* could not enter into our Thoughts. Some natural Impressions Men have of God as a Lawgiver standing upon Terms of Obedience with them, according to the first Covenant, namely of Works made with the first *Adam* ; but God in Christ as the End of the Law for Righteousness, and fulfilling the Righteousness of the Law in the Sinner's Room, is such a hidden Mystery, so far above the natural Thoughts of Man, that even where the objective Revelation of this Mystery is made, without the subjective,

tive, internal, saving Illumination in the Knowledge thereof, Men cannot have or entertain any due Apprehensions of it, but remain doting upon their legal Dreams and Imaginations concerning God, as in the old Covenant relation to them. This was evident in the Pharisees here, notwithstanding of the Gospel-light they had both from the Old Testament Prophecies and Promises of Christ, and from the Rays of the Sun of Righteousness himself now arisen among them; still they were doting upon the Law, and had some dark Thoughts of God with relation thereto; therefore Christ, to direct their Thoughts in the only way to God, he leads them to himself. And as the Disciples themselves, being but partly enlightened herein, need to be directed in their Faith and spiritual Thoughts of God, that they be not legal, terminating upon God absolutely, but evangelical upon Christ, or God in him, *John xiv. 1. Ye believe in God, believe also in me*; so much more do blind Pharisees need to be directed to the right Road, as here our Lord does. Ye think of God, but what think ye of Christ?

4th Remark, When Christ is revealed, People may think of him, and yet think amiss, unless their Thoughts be spiritualized by a supernatural Change of the Mind, and a saving Illumination of their Understanding in the Knowledge of Christ. Thoughts may be considered as either rational and speculative, which is just the Work of the Brain, and lies only in a bare Theory of Divine Things; or as practical and spiritually operative, which does not rest in the Head, but affects the Heart, and sets the Affections in Motion towards Divine Things, and raises the spiritual Estimation thereof. Now, whatever Thoughts of Christ the natural Man may have in the former Sense, yet no suitable Thoughts of Christ can he have in the latter Sense, till a supernatural Change be wrought by saving Illumination. It is as impossible for a Man in the black State of Nature to think upon Christ or spiritual Things in a spiritual Manner, as it is for a Man that was born blind to judge of Colours

Colours, or to be taken up with their Beauty and Lustre, 1 Cor. ii. 14. *The natural Man receives not the Things of God, they are Foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned.* This Discerning he cannot have, till he be translated out of Darkness to God's marvellous Light, and till the God, who commanded Light to shine out of Darkness, shine into his Heart, &c. 2 Cor. iv. 6. People then may think of Christ, and yet think amiss, without this saving Illumination. This is also supposed here in the Question; for the *Pharisees* did not want some Thoughts of Christ the *Messias*, and partly right Thoughts too upon the Matter, while they thought he was the Son of *David*; yet they were so far from being right Thoughts of Christ, as God-Man, and as to the Manner of their thinking of him, that they had no due Esteem of the true Christ; nay, he was despised and rejected of them, as a Root out of a dry Ground, and as having no Form or Comeliness, *Isa.* liii. 2, 3. And thus he is still undervalued of Multitudes, who yet judge they have right enough Thoughts of Christ; they think of him, but think amiss: And therefore the Question is not merely concerning the Act of Thinking, but the Quality thereof; it is not, Have you any Thoughts of Christ; do you ever think of him? but it is, What think you of him?

5th Remark, That Man's Thoughts are within God's Jurisdiction, and under his Authority. The Commands of God extend not only to the outward, but the inward Man of the Heart, and consequently further than ever any earthly Command could go: Where was there ever a Monarch that could give out such Laws, as would bind the Heart and Thoughts of Men? If any Mortal should make a Law, that his Subjects should not dare, upon their Peril, to welcome a traiterous Thought against his Royal Person, otherwise he would be avenged upon them; really such an one would deserve to be laughed at for his Pride, and Folly more than *Calligula*, who threatned the Air, if it durst rain when he was at his Pastime, who yet durst not look upon

pon the Air when it thundred. It were the Height of Madness, for any Crown'd Head in the World, or Potentate on Earth, so far to forfeit their Reason, as to think, that the Thoughts of Mens Hearts were within their Territories or Jurisdiction: But behold, they are all under the Authority of God; for his Name is [Gr. *Kardiognoskes*] the Searcher of the Heart, and the Trier of the Reins of the Children of Men. Think not that Thoughts are free, any more than your Words or Actions before God: It is his Prerogative to lay Bands upon the inner Man, and to judge the Secrets of Men, *Rom. ii. 16.* by Jesus Christ, who is here the Catechist, putting the Question to you; and he is the fittest Hand, for he knows what Course your Thoughts are driving: He is the Witness, and will be the Judge of your Thoughts, which are all under his Jurisdiction, Therefore it is his unquestionable Right, to call you to an Account of your Thoughts; Thoughts are as visible and evident as Actions to him, *Heb. iv. 12, 13.* *The Word of God, the essential Word, the Word that was made Flesh, is quick and powerful, &c. a Discerner of the Thoughts and Intents of the Heart; neither is there any Creature that is not manifest in his Sight, but all Things are naked and open to the Eyes of him with whom we have to do.* He knows our Thoughts afar off, even before we think them, and Thoughts are Actions before him; Heart Thoughts are Heart-Acts, and real Deeds in his Sight; the adulterous Thought is Adultery before him, and will be judged as such; the covetous Thought is Idolatry before him, the malicious Thought is Murder, and the unbelieving Thought is Unbelief, the contemning Thought of Christ is Contempt itself: He is an infinite Spirit, that sees your Thoughts better than Men see your Actions; and therefore answer for your Thoughts to him, What think ye of Christ?

6th Remark, That as Men may expect to be catechised, and examined of God, with respect to their Thoughts, as well as their Actions, so especially anent their Thoughts of Christ. And as God will judge us by

by the Thoughts we have of Christ, so we ought to try and judge our selves by this Rule; for as our Thoughts are, so are we; yea, God's Thoughts of us are according to our Thoughts of Christ. If we think nothing of Christ, God thinks nothing of us; if we think highly of Christ, God thinks highly of us in him: For, as God's Thoughts of Christ are very high and honourable, he being the Father's Darling and Delight, *Isa*, xlii. 1. so, when our Thoughts of Christ in some Measure agree with God's Thoughts of him, and we think highly and honourably of him, as God does; surely it is evident, that we have the Spirit of God, and that as God is well pleased with Christ, so he is well pleased with us in him. Now, if our Thoughts and Hearts condemn us in this Matter, God is greater than our Hearts, and knows all Things; but if our Hearts and Thoughts condemn us not, then we have Confidence towards God, *1 John* iii. 20, 21. It is true, the natural Conscience of Men, and their Thoughts, may accuse or excuse, and so condemn or justify them, according as they do Good or Evil, *Rom.* ii. 15. and to be thus condemned or justified, is no Evidence of the Man's State before God; for this only shews the Work of the Law, written in our Hearts by Nature, even the Covenant of Works, which says, That the Doer of the Law shall be justified, *Verse* 13. and the Breaker of the Law shall be condemned. These are some of the Beams of Nature's Light; all Men may find themselves condemned here, and they that think themselves justified here before God by their good Deeds, they but discover their Ignorance of the Law, which condemns all vain and evil Thoughts, as well as evil Deeds; and therefore no Man can have his Heart and Thoughts justifying him before God, nor a good Conscience or Confidence towards God, till once he come to think duly of Christ, from whom the Law hath got full Satisfaction to all its Commands and Demands, and by whose Blood the fiery Law is extinguished: The Conscience being sprinkled with that Blood, and so purged from dead legal Works to serve the living

ving God, the Man hath Confidence towards God, according to the Measure of his Faith, and regular Thoughts of Christ. The more a Man thinks upon the Law, the more will his Thoughts condemn him, if he understood the Spirituality of the Law: But, the more he thinks of Christ as the the End of the Law for Righteousness, the more will his Thoughts and Conscience smile upon him, and give him Confidence towards God; for we have Boldness to enter into the Holiest, and to come to a holy God, by the Blood of Jesus, *Heb. x. 19.* They that think much of themselves, and think little or nothing of Christ, they are least in the Kingdom of Heaven, yea they are not of that Kingdom at all; they despise Christ, and God despises them: But they that think little of themselves, or think nothing of themselves, but think much of Christ, and think every Way highly and honourably of him, they are great in the Kingdom of God; Christ is great in their Eye, and they are great in God's Eye, being accepted in the Beloved: Therefore the great Question is, *What think ye of Christ?*

SECOND HEAD.

The *second* Head proposed, was, To shew the Import of this Question, *What think ye of Christ?* That People may not deceive themselves with passing Thoughts they may have of Christ, I would more closely open up the Meaning and Import of the Question; and this being the main Head upon the doctrinal Part, we must explain the several Branches of the Question, and so shew the Import of it. 1. *Objectively*, with Respect to the *Object*, Christ. 2. *Actively*, with respect to the *Act* of Thinking. 3. *Formally*, with respect to the *Quality* of the Act, what Sort of a Thought it is; *What think ye of him?* 4. *Subjectively*, with respect to the Persons that are the Subjects, *ye*; *What think ye of Christ?*

First then, I am to consider the Import of this Question, with respect to the *Object* or Matter of our Thoughts, namely, Christ; *What think ye of Christ?*

And

And here I own it is impossible for me to go through all that I thought might be said here! There are so many Things in Christ, that I found to be the Matter of the Question, he being All in all, and all the Fulness of the Godhead being in him, that, before ever I was aware, there were more than an hundred Questions occurred to me, that might be put upon this one Particular; and therefore I found a Necessity of restricting myself. And tho', if Time allow, in the Application I may thro' Grace dilate upon some of these; yet at present I shall confine myself to what I judge precisely to be the Scope of the Text and Context, and the Intent of the Spirit of God in this Question, *What think ye of Christ?* That is, 1. What think ye of his Righteousness? 2. What think ye of his Pedigree! 3. What think ye of his Person? 4. What think ye of his Anointing? These Four, I suppose, we will find as the special Import of the Question here.

First, What think ye of his Righteousness? This I place first. because I judge from what goes before as the Occasion of this Question, that the great Design of Christ therein was to lead off these self-righteous *Pharisees* from the Righteousness of Works and of the Law, anent which all their Questions were put to him, and to lead them to another Righteousness, even to himself as the Lord their Righteousness, the End of the Law. You think to be justified by the Deeds of the Law; but, How is that possible, seeing by the Law is the Knowledge of Sin? *Rom. iii. 20.* If ye will stand close to these old Covenant Terms with God, then let the Law itself catechise you; Where is your Righteousness of Nature and Practice, that the Law requires? Where is your Righteousness of Thought, Word and Deed, that it requires? Where is your Righteousness of Affection and Action, that it requires? Where is your perfect, personal and perpetual Obedience, your Righteousness internal in Heart, external in Life, and eternal in Duration, which the Law requires? for, *Cursed is every One that continues not in all Things written in the Book of the Law, to do them,*

Gal. iii. 10. The Law will tell you, that tho' you keep it wholly, and yet offend in one Point, you are guilty of all, *Jam. ii. 20.* Now, is there no Point wrong in your State, Nature, Heart or Thought all your Days, not to speak of your Words and Actions? If there be, then you're guilty of all; and seeing by the Law is the Knowledge thus of your Sin and Guilt, how can you be justified by the Law? Can that holy righteous Law pronounce you just and righteous? No, no; in vain do you think of Righteousness by the Law: Therefore, what think ye of Christ the Messias, who is called *Jehovah Tsidkennu, the Lord our Righteousness*, *Jer. xxiii. 6.* It is he that came to fulfil the Righteousness of the Law in his own Person really and actively, that the Righteousness of the Law might be fulfilled in us imputatively and passively, *Rom. vii. 4.* Is not this the only Righteousness that magnifies the Law and makes it honourable? You magnify your own Righteousness, which does but disgrace and dishonour the Law; but what think ye of Christ? Do you magnify and honour him, as *the Lord the Righteousness*? Ought not you to magnify that Righteousness that magnifies the Law, seeing it is more than an Angelical Righteousness? It is not the Righteousness of a Man only, or of *David's Son*; but the Righteousness of God, and of *David's Lord*. If you think no more of Christ but that he is *David's Son*, no wonder then you be hankering after the Law, and a poor pitiful Righteousness of your own; you have never seen the glory of Christ's Righteousness: But if you think duly of Christ, you'll see him to be the Lord Jehovah, and his Righteousness to be a glorious Divine Righteousness, so as you will count all things but Loss and Dung for the Excellency of the Knowledge of him, and to be found in him, not having your own Righteousness that is after the Law, but the Righteousness which is of God in Christ by Faith, *Phil. ii. 8, 9.* Let all your Questions about the Law then, might Christ say, give Way to this great Question, what think ye of Christ, and his Law-biding Righteousness.

Righteousness? Your Righteousness will not abide the first Fire of the Law when it comes to be discharged against you, and to exact Obedience and Satisfaction; but Christ's Obedience unto Death answers the whole Charge of its Precept and Sanction both to the full: Therefore, what think ye of Christ, and what think ye of his Righteousness? This is the first Thing imported in this Question, as it stands here.

Secondly, what think ye of his Pedigree? That this is imported in the Question, appears from the Connection also, *Whose Son in he?* What think ye of his Pedigree? They thought it was easy to answer that Question, by saying only, He is *David's Son*. They might have known it was not so easy to answer that Question, if they had considered the Question of the Prophet *Isaiah*, Chap. liii. 8. *Who shall declare his generation?* And the Description which that Prophet gives of him, *Isa. ix. 6.* that the Name of the *Messias*, the Child born and Son given to us, should be *Wonderful, Counsellor, and the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.* What think ye of his Pedigree as he is Man? No doubt this was partly implied in the Question; for Christ did not disprove their Answer, tho' it was but to the least Part of the Question: He is *David's Son*, say they; and it is right to think of him as the Son of *David*, clothed with our Nature: Here was the *great Mystery of Godliness, God manifested in the Flesh.* It was no Mystery for the *Pharisees* to think only that he was the Son of *David*; *David* had other Sons, and a numerous Seed: And if that be all, that he was the Son of *David*, they might thus think of Christ, and yet think nothing of him. But it is another Thing to think of him as God in our Nature. If we think duly of Christ as the Son of *David*, or in humane Nature, then, must we not think that God is come very near to us, so as there is a natural Sibness betwixt him and us, he being *Bone of our Bone, and Flesh of our Flesh?* Must we not think, that he wonderfully emptied himself of his Divine Glory, and humbled himself unto Death?

death? Tho' he thought it no Robbery to be equal with God, yet he suffered himself to be denuded of his glory, clothed with Rags of our Flesh: God calls him the Man that it is his Fellow, yet he was made a Fellow to Thieves and Malefactors, and a Murderer preferred before him. Tho' he was the Prince of Life, yet, as the Word may be rendered, he evacuated or emptied himself unto death; and yet, to them that know him, he is most lovely, even in his greatest Abasement. What think ye of Christ as man, as the Son of *David*, the Son of man, a man of the same Infirmities with us, except sinful Infirmities? He was made in all Things like unto us, Sin only excepted: He became a poor man in all outward Respects, a distressed man, *a Man of Sorrows and acquainted with Grief*, a tempted man, tossed and tempted of the devil sometimes, he going thro' all the Ages of a man, first conceived, then born, then a Babe, then a Youth, and at last the perfect Stature of a man: He became a mortal man, and accordingly was put to a painful and shameful death; yet a holy man, a wonderful man, a God-man: What think ye of the man Christ Jesus? But the main Thing imported in the Question here with relation to his Pedigree, is, What think ye of his Pedigree, as he is God? What think ye of Christ, in this Respect? For to separate Christ from God, is to make him no Christ; therefore the Question is, What think ye of Christ, whose Son he is, with respect to his divine Nature, as well as his Humane? That this was the Import of his Question, appears from his Reply to their Answer, *How then does David call him Lord?* He is Lord **JEHOVAH**, the only begotten Son of God, the Brightness of the Father's Glory, &c. by whom all Things were made, *John i. 3. Heb. i. 2.* It is the *Arian* Blasphemy, to affirm him to be no more but *Omnisfius Patri*, but not *Omousius*; that is, like unto the Father, but not the same Essence and Substance with him. He is, according to his Godhead, arrayed with all Glory. All the Creatures are to him as the drop of a Bucket; yea, as nothing, and

less than nothing and Vanity; he hath a Name above every Name, and all the Creatures are but Shadows to him, who is the substantial Image of God: He is the eternal Son of God, by an ineffable generation; whatever *Arians* and *Atheists* think of Christ; yet Christ himself thought it no Robbery to be equal with God, *Phil.* ii. 6. Therefore what think ye of Christ? Is he no more but the Son of *David*? The *Jews* looked upon Christ, as an ignorant Clown will look upon the Sun, and, it may be, will think it no bigger than his Bonnet, or, at most, no larger than a millstone; so did the *Jews*: The Pharisees looked upon the Son of God, saying, *Is not this the Carpenter's Son?* But their utmost was, That he was the Son of *David*, they did not see him to be the Son of God. What think ye of Christ? Do ye see all the Attributes of God to be in him, and all his Actions, as Mediator, to be dignified with infinite Virtue and Value; that he was able to satisfy infinite Justice; that he is able to save to the uttermost; that he is the adequate Object of divine Worship, and a full suitable Portion for an immortal Soul, because he is the Son of God, as well as the Son of *David*? All this is imported in the Question, *What think ye of Christ?*

Thirdly, What think ye of his Person? This Question is also plainly imported in that, What think ye of Christ, namely, as he is God-man in one Person, and the second Person of the glorious Trinity? It is plain, that Christ speaks of himself here as personally considered, and as having two distinct Natures in one Person. Now, the Humane Nature of Christ is not a Person distinct from the divine; tho' the Natures are distinct, the Person is One. But the Answer of the Pharisees to this Question, shewed they had no distinct Knowledge of this mystery; for they answer, He is the Son of *David*, without knowing that he was the Son of God, as well as the Son of *David*, in one Person; which made Christ here to declare his sovereign Lordship and Godhead, as well as his manhood. The mystery of the Question then, which they did not under-

derstand, was, What think ye of that wonderful Person God-man, in whom the Humane Nature is advanced to such an unspeakable dignity, as to be united to, and of the same Personality with the Son of God? Here is Matter of Thought to the intelligent Mind: What think ye of the wonderful Manner, in which sinful Men may come to be Partakers of the divine Nature, even by the holy Son of God his being a Partaker of the humane Nature? Here is a glorious Subject for Thought and Contemplation. What think ye of the wonderful Way, that God in his infinite Wisdom hath taken, to bring God and Men together, even in and through him, who is both God and Man, and partaking of both Natures in one Person, is fit for bringing both God and Man into one, and to lay his Hand upon both Parties? What think ye of such a glorious Person as finite and Infinite, Time and Eternity, Creator and Creature joined together? *John i. 14. The Word was made Flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his Glory, the Glory as of the only Begotten of the Father, full of Grace and Truth.*

Fourthly, What think ye of his *Unction* or Anointing? This I suppose must also be the Import of the Question objectively considered, as it is here generally proposed; for Christ signifies *Anointed*, in the Hebrew it is *Messias*, in the Greek it is *Christ*, and in our Language it is the *Anointed*: And this being the main Word, on which the Weight of the general Question itself lies, it is the more necessary that this be particularly opened. The Question then comes to this in general, What think ye of his Father the Anointer: *John vi. 27. For him hath God the Father sealed; How? See Psal. xlv. 7. God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the Oil of Gladness above thy fellows.* How much Pains is Christ at, in the Gospel, to recommend his Father, as sending and authorising him to his Mediatorial Work? Again, What think ye of his Office, to which he is anointed? He hath not taken the Honour of the mediatorial Office upon him, without being called of God, and anointed of God thereunto.

Heb.

Heb. v. 5. we do not think honourably enough of any of his saving Offices, unless we at the same Time apprehend his Divine Unction thereunto. Again it comes to this, What think ye of his Spirit, the Ointment wherewith he is anointed? *Isa. lxi. 1. The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, for he hath anointed me. Isa. xlii. 1. I have put my Spirit upon him, and he shall bring forth Judgment to the Gentiles.* There is the Meaning of the Question in general, with respect to this *Christ*, who is the Subject-Matter of the Question: But there is much in this Name *Christ*, and more than we can tell; I only name some Particulars further here imported. (1.) What think ye of his Prophecy and Teaching? For, as *Christ*, he is anointed to be a Prophet: *Who teaches like him?* says *Elibu, Job xxxvi. 22.* Other Prophets and Teachers have no Wisdom but what he gives them; but in him are hid all the Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge. Other Prophets may err, but he teaches infallibly; for he is truth itself, full of Grace and Truth. Other Teachers may be dashed, but he teaches authoritatively; he speaks as One having Authority, and not as the Scribes. Other Teachers may fail in their Design, and prove unsuccessful in their Work; but he teaches efficaciously: Men work upon a Capacity, but he can give the Capacity; the Entrance of his Words giveth Light, he gives Understanding to the Simple. The Excellency of his Teaching is singular, if we consider his Ability and Fidelity; the Matter of his Teaching is singular, if we consider it is the whole Will of God for our Salvation; the Manner of his Teaching is singular, if we consider it is by his Word and Spirit, and even by a humane Voice, he can convey his Divine Power; the Extent of his Teaching is singular, if we consider it extends to all Sorts of Persons, *Jews and Gentiles*, and to all Sorts of Things necessary to eternal Life: This Anointing teaches all Things, *1 John ii. 27.* In a Word, none have Authority to teach, but by Commission from him; neither can any other Teacher preach himself: We preach not ourselves, but *Christ Jesus*
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the Lord, and to him gave all the Prophets Witness. But it is his Prerogative alone, to preach himself, saying, *Come to me, all ye that labour, &c.* Look to me and be saved; I am the Rose of Sharon, I am the Light of the World; I am the Way, the Truth and the Life. O then, was there ever any Phrophet or Teacher that could compete with him? *The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me*, says Christ, *for he hath anointed me to preach glad Tidings to the Meek*: He is the Christ, the anointed Prophet; and what think ye of Christ; (2.) What think ye of his Priesthood? For, as Christ, he is anointed to be a Priest for ever, after the Order of Melchisedeck. All the Levitical Priests were but Shadows and Types of him, who was the true Priest, the true Temple, the true Altar, the true Sacrifice all in one. What high Thoughts may we have of his Oblation, or Obedience unto Death, even the Death of the Cross? For here was the grand Condition of the Covenant of Redemption or Grace fulfilled. The Covenant of Grace was all Grace with Respect to God, who of his Grace found out the Ransom, and with Respect to us who are saved by Grace; but with Respect to Christ, it is a Covenant made upon Terms and Conditions, namely, his Obedience, Righteousness, Passion and Oblation; *Whom God hath set forth to be the Propitiation through Faith in his Blood, &c.* Rom. iii. 25. O what a free, full, perfect, holy, sweet and satisfying Sacrifice did he offer up of himself, even a Sacrifice of a sweet-smelling Savour unto God, whereby Justice was satisfy'd, Wrath appeased, Sin expiated, God attoned, Death vanquish't, Hell quenched, Heaven purchased, and the Devil's Kingdom destroyed; for by Death he destroyed him that had the Power of Death, that is the Devil! What may we think of his Intercession, grounded upon this Oblation? *For he is able to save to the uttermost all that come to God by him, because he ever lives to make Intercession.* Here is the Antidote against all Charges and Accusations, Rom. viii. 33, 34. The Antidote against all Temptations, Heb. ii. 17, 18. & iv. 14, 15.

an Antidote against all the Snares of the World, *John* xvii. 15. against all Sins, Failings and Infirmities, 1 *John* ii. 1, 2. against all Fears, through Sense of Unworthiness, to draw near to God's Throne of Grace, *Heb.* iv. 15, 16. *Heb.* x. 19, 20, 21, 22. and against all Fears of Apostacy and Falling away, *John* xvii. 11. O his Promise, his Power, his Prayer, give great Security, and greater cannot be given: He hath prayed for the Spirit, and the constant Abiding thereof, *John* xiv. 16, 17. see *John* iv. 14. Christ's Intercession is founded on his Oblation, and the Father is so well pleased with the Oblation, that he cannot refuse his Intercession; nay, he hears him always: Therefore, what think ye of Christ? (3.) What think ye of his Kingdom and Royalty? The Question, *What think ye of Christ?* imports this also; for, as Christ, he is anointed to be a King, *Psal.* ii. 6. *I have set my King,* or, as it is in the *Hebrew*, anointed my King, *upon my holy hill of Zion.* Is not all Power in Heaven and Earth committed unto him, having on his Vesture and Thigh this Name written, KING of KINGS, and LORD of LORDS? He is the King eternal and immortal, the Government is upon his Shoulders, and of the Increase of his Kingdom and Government there shall be no End. His delivering up the Kingdom to his Father at last, is but a Changing the Manner of his Administration, and delivering up all his Members, of whom his Kingdom consists, unto his Father, to be eternally crowned and glorified; He will reign through Eternity, and the Children of *Zion* will be joyful in their King, and sing through Eternity. I might here shew what a powerful and peaceable, mild and merciful, wise and holy, just and righteous King our Lord Jesus is; and then ask you, *What think ye of Christ?* But it is not possible to give so much as a Hint at the Thousand Part of his Glory and Royalty: His Kingdom is spiritual and internal; if you be his Spiritual Subjects, his Kingdom is within you; yea, tho' you be yet Subjects to the Devil, he hath Power over all Hearts, and can soften the hardest, and bind the stout-

est, and make the People fall down under him : Yea, as he is able so he is willing ; for he is not only the God of Power, but the Prince of Peace, Isa. ix. 6. and therefore, as a Prophet, he preaches Peace ; as a Priest, he purchases Peace ; and as a King, he proclaims Peace ; yea, Creates the Fruit of the Lips, Peace, Peace to him that is afar off, and to him that is nigh. As a powerful Potentate he is able, and as a Prince of Peace he is ready, to save to the uttermost. As he is full of Power, so he is full of Pity ; and his Power and Peace both are joined together, for the Encouragement of Sinners to come to him, Isa. xxvii. 5. *Let him take Hold of my Strength, that he may make Peace with me, and he shall make Peace with me.* Perhaps, by the By, some poor Soul is thinking, O but I have no Strength to take Hold of his Strength. Well, it is right so to think of yourself, and of your own Weakness and Wickedness : But no Strength comes in by that Thought, while poring on yourself only ; that is but the Half of what you are to think, when you think right of yourselves, as weak and wicked. But what think ye of Christ our glorious King ? If you can think honourably of him, as able and willing to help you, O you would find Strength coming in with such a Thought : And high Thoughts of a powerful and merciful King Jesus, is one of the Ways of taking Hold of his Strength. If you suppose that you think he is able and ready, and yet you find no Strength coming in, O suspect your own Thought of him, that it is but a misbelieving and dishonourable Thought : For I assure you, right Thoughts of Christ will set the Heart all in Motion towards him. But now O there would be no End in speaking of the Royalties of King Jesus, his Royal Throne, his Royal Crown, his Royal Victories, his Royal Triumphs, and the Royal Intertainment that he gives to his Subjects at his Table above, and even below, when he brings them to his Banqueting-house. I shall only add, That as it is said of Solomon, There was no King like him, so behold a greater than Solomon is here : There is no King like

like him who is the King of Zion; he hath all other Kings under his Check and Controul; and what think ye of Christ then? Other Kings have their Dominions, for the most Part, by Usurpation, by Encroachment; but Christ is King constitute of his Father *Psal. lxxxix. 27. I'll make him my First-born, higher than the Kings of the Earth,* and all this for the Good of his People, *Eph. i. 22. He hath put all Things under his Feet, and given him to be Head over all Things unto his Church.* This leads to another Import of the Question; that is,

(4.) What think ye of his Authority and Ability, Commission, Fulness, Furniture, and Fitness for executing of these saving Offices? For all this is implied in the Designation CHRIST, the Anointed; that is, One commisionate and qualified of God, by a super-eminent Unction, *John iii. 34. Behold his Excellency here, above all that ever had the like Offices. Behold he is anointed, for the Concurrence of all these Offices, whether general; as Saviour, Surety, Redeemer; or particular, as Prophet, Priest, King. Some have been Prophets, some Priests, some Kings anointed; but never any was anointed to all these but Christ: What think ye of Christ? Behold the Matter of his Anointing; others have been anointed with material Oil, but he is anointed with Holy Oil, the Holy Spirit. And whereas others have had the Spirit in some Respects, therefore behold the Measure of his Anointing; Others were anointed in Measure, but he without Measure; They may have a Fulness of Sufficiency, but he hath a Fulness of Redundancy; they a Fulness like the Fulness of a Vessel, but his the Fulness of an Ocean; they a Plenitude, but he a Fountain. Behold and view the Duration of his Anointing; his Saints and Servants may have the Spirit sometimes working, sometimes ceasing, sometimes flowing, and sometimes ebbing; but Christ is anointed with an enduring Unction, *John i. 33. The Spirit that descended on him, did remain and rest upon him; see Isa. lix. last. Hence behold also the Equality of his Anointing**

ting with himself : The Spirit given to others, that were invested with any Office in God's House, did work with them as mere Men ; There was no Equality betwixt them and the Spirit given to them : But as Christ is anointed with the Spirit as he is Mediator God-Man, so as to God he is co-equal with the Spirit, wherewith he is anointed ; yea, the same in Substance, equal in Power and in Glory with the Father and the Holy Ghost. And what think ye of Christ, his Authority, Ability, and Furniture for his Work ? In a Word, behold the *Efficacy* of his Anointing : and the communicable Nature thereof : He is anointed above his Fellows, yet so, as he hath Fellows to whom he allows Fellowship in the same Anointing : He hath not only received the Spirit of all Grace and Gifts for himself, but *He received gifts for Men, even for the Rebels,* Psal. lxxiii. 18. Hence, according to his Pleasure, he allows the Oil to drop down to the Skirts of his Garment ; yea, like Rain upon the mown Grass, or Showers that water the Earth, *Psal. lxxii. 6.* It is true, Ministers anointed with the Spirit are said to drop, *Ezek. xx. 46. Son of man, drop thy Words towards the south :* And *Moses says, my Doctrine shall drop as the Rain ;* but as the Clouds from whence the Rain descends have not their Water originally in themselves, but from the Sea, and moist Places of the Earth, exhaled and drawn up by the Heat of the Sun ; so no Minister of Christ hath a Faculty of teaching heavenly and divine Things, and ~~saying~~ Gospel-Truths of himself ; but it is drawn up out of Christ, as out of a full Sea and Ocean of all Wisdom and Knowledge ; and is conveyed unto them, by the Heat and Vigour, not of their own Spirit, but the Spirit of Christ, who is anointed, to anoint others. And O for a liberal Share of his anointing among us at this Occasion ! In a Word, the Name *Christ* imports such an Anointing, as that he is qualified with all Authority and Ability, all Furniture and Fittedness for his Work of saving Sinners ; with all Fulness of Divine Perfections, and all Fulness of Mediatorial Gifts and Graces : And
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all this is imported in the Question, *What think ye of Christ?*

(5.) What think ye of his Aromaticall Savour? For this is his Name, *Christ the Anointed*; his Ointment casts a Perfume through Heaven and Earth. How savoury is he to God? Why his Sacrifice was of a sweet-smelling Savour unto his Father, *Eph. v. 2.* The stinking Smell of Sin is extinguished thereby, and the Persons and Performances of Believers perfumed; and hence, how savoury also to Believers? *Song i. 13.* *His Lips are like Lillies, dropping sweet-smelling Myrrhe.* What think ye of his savoury Name? *Song i. 3, 5.* *Because of the savour of thy good Ointments, thy Name is as Ointment poured forth; Therefore do the Virgins love thee.* Were it no more but the Name JESUS a SAVIOUR, may it not be so delightful to Sinners, as to cause their Hearts leap within them when they hear it, as *John* leapt in his Mother's Womb for Joy, at the Voice of the Blessed Virgin's Salutation, *Luke i. 44.* O what think ye of the Sweet Name JESUS! It should even pluck your Heart out of your Bosom, and transplant it into the Bosom of Christ. How delightful is the very Naming of a Temporal Saviour to them that are in Misery, when they hear of his Ability and Readiness to deliver them? And may not your Heart even dance within you for Joy, when you hear us speak to you of such a Saviour as saves from Sin and Wrath? O sweet-smelling Name! O have you no Sense of Smelling! What think ye of Christ?

(6.) What think ye of his Beauty and Comeliness? This is also imported in his Name CHRIST, and so in the Question, *What think ye of Christ, the Anointed?* Ointment and Perfume rejoice the Heart, says *Solomon*, *Prov. xxvii. 9.* Now, Christ is anointed with the Oil of gladness, *Psal. xlv. 7.* and a glad Heart makes a cheerful countenance; yea, Oil makes the Face to shine, *Psal. civ. 15.* A Saint, that hath but a Sprinkling of this Oil, how will his Face shine, and his Countenance, like *Hanna's*, be no more sad; How did *Moses* his Face shine when some of this Oil

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was upon him ! But O what think ye of the shining Glory and Comeliness of Christ, who is anointed from Head to Foot ! Is he not *altogether lovely* ? Is he not *white and ruddy, the chief among Ten Thousands* ? Is he not a perfect Beauty ? All God's Fulness is in him, all God's Beauty is in him, all God's Glory is to be seen in the Face of *Jesus*, 2 Cor. iv. 6. O then, *What think ye of Christ* ?

(7.) What think ye of his Worth and Preciousness ? This is also imported in the Name CHRIST, and so in the Question, *What think ye of Christ*, the Anointed ? for it is *precious Ointment*, Psal. cxxxiii. 2. Ointment was reckoned of great Worth and Esteem among the *Jews* ; It was among the precious Presents that were sent unto Kings, *Isa. lvii. 9. Hos. xii. i.* O how great is the Preciousness and Worth of Christ ! It is the Delight and Recreation, the Study and Occupation of Elect Angels, to pry into the Preciousness of Christ, to look upon the Frame and Fabrick of Salvation to Mankind-sinners by Christ, that they may therein observe the glorious Attributes of God, his Wisdom, Power, Holiness, Justice, Truth, Mercy, all shining and glittering in it, like bright Stars in the Firmament. Let a profane World think what they will of Christ ; let them slight him and his Gospel ; let them scorn him, and cast him at their Heels ; let them trample on his Blood and Passion, as their Manner is, making it a common and worthless Thing ; let them despise his high and celestial Mysteries : We need not care for their Thoughts ; It is enough that God the Father hath honoured and exalted him, that the holy Angels do reverence and worship him, and that all the Saints do magnify him. *To them that believe he is precious* : O his Blood is precious, Blood, his Promises are precious Promises, his Love is precious Love, and every Thing about him is precious ; *What think ye of Christ* ?

(8.) Again, to add no more here, What think ye of his Vertue and Usefulness ? This, I suppose, is also imported in the Name CHRIST, and in the Question

tion objectively considered, *What think ye of Christ the Anointed?* For as Ointment was and is of manifold Usefulness, so is Christ: Especially Oil hath a twofold Vertue, *1st*, A mollifying Vertue, and a softening Quality; such is the Vertue of Christ: Were the Heart never so hard, he can soften and mollify it; a Drop of that Oil with which he is anointed, I mean the smallest saving Motion of his Spirit, can melt and dissolve the Heart, tho' it were harder than a Stone or Adamant, *Ezek. xxxvi. 26. 2dly*, It hath a medicinal Vertue; hence it is said of the Samaritan, *Luke x. 34.* that he poured in Oil into the Wounds of the distressed Man. Christ is the tender-hearted Samaritan, his Blood and Spirit is the Ointment for curing all the Wounds that we got by the Old Serpent. What Wounds, what Plagues, what deadly Diseases and desperate Maladies are among you? Behold, there is no Disease out of Hell that surmounts the medicinal Vertue that is in Christ! O then, *What think ye of Christ?* Is there none here to think highly of him? Now, these Particulars that I have mentioned are imported in the very Name CHRIST, and so implied in the Question objectively considered, or with respect to the Object thereof, *What think ye of Christ?*

The *Second* Thing here proposed, was, To shew the Import of this Question *Actively* considered, or with respect to the Act of Thinking; *What think ye of Christ?* Now the full Import of this Question, thus viewed, may comprehend more than People are ready to imagine. It is not a passing Thought, or fleeting Imagination; we ought not to explain the Words of Christ by the Motions and Notions of our own Spirits: We need the Spirit of Christ to explain the Words of Christ according to the Mind of Christ, *1 Cor. ii. last.* We may be sure, as the Apostle says, *2 Cor. ii. 5.* that *we are not sufficient of ourselves to think any Thing as of ourselves, our Sufficiency must be of God:* And if we can think of nothing aright of ourselves, far less we can think of Christ: And as none can speak duly of Christ, nor call Jesus Lord, without the Spirit;

rit; so neither can we think duly of Christ, without the Spirit of Christ. What then is the Meaning of this Question relating to its Act of Thinking, *What think ye of Christ?* There are these following Particulars, which I suppose are implied therein, and which I shall also propose by Way of *Query*, that you may still search yourselves and apply as we go along.

(1.) *What think ye of Christ?* That is, What know ye of Christ? what understand ye of Christ? Surely ye cannot have a right Thought of that which ye do not know or understand. Have ye got the *Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation in the Knowledge of Christ?* Eph. i. 17. Hath the God, who commanded the Light to shine out of Darkness, shined into your Hearts, to give you the Light of the Knowledge of his Glory in the Face of Jesus Christ? Hath God revealed his Son in you? Gal. i. 16. Have you seen the Son? He that sees the natural Sun in the Firmament, hath a Thought of it suitable to the Sight he hath thereof: But a Man that hath been born blind, and never saw the Light, he cannot have a right Notion or Thought of the Sun, tho' you should speak never so much of the Glory of it to him. I have heard of a Man born blind, on whom a great deal of Pains was taken to let him understand what a glorious Creature the Sun was, and what bright Beams and Rays it sends forth thro' all the World; but he was so far from having any right Thoughts about it, that, after all the Pains taken on him that was possible, he cries out, O now (says he) *I know what it is, it is just like the sound of a Trumpet.* Poor Man; there was the best Notion he could frame about it, for he never had Eyes. So it is here, Sirs, we are all born blind, having no spiritual Eyes, till God open the Eyes of the Understanding, and enlighten the Mind in the Knowledge of Christ: We may speak of his Glory and Excellency; but the best you make of him is, O he is like a very stately and majestick Person as ever ye saw or heard tell of; and so you frame the Image of a great Man, sitting on a lofty

lofty Throne, compassed about with so many sparkling Attendants in fine Robes: And what you have heard with your natural Ears of any Person, or seen with your natural Eyes, or can conceive with your natural Understanding and Reason, helps you to, or furnishes you with Materials for framing such a Notion of him. But what is all this? It is nothing but an Image of your own Brain, a carnal fantastical Thought; the true Christ is the Image of the invisible God, the Wisdom of God, and the Power of God, God-Man in one Person. Now, have you got a spiritual Discerning; for 'the natural Man receives not the Things of the Spirit of God; they are foolishness to him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.' The World cannot think of Christ, far less think much of him, because they do not know him: Like *Esop's* Cock, contenting himself with, and thinking more of a Barley-corn than of a Pearl, because he knew not the Worth of it; so the World think more of the Barley-corn of temporal good things, than they think of the Pearl of great Price, because they know it not: Therefore the Question imports, What *know* ye of Christ?

(2.) *What think ye of Christ?* That is, What *believe* ye of Christ? Knowledge and Faith are like the two Eyes of the Soul; Knowledge is the discerning and apprehending Eye, Faith is the applying and appropriating Eye. And as saving Knowledge is objective Faith, and saving Faith fiducial Knowledge; so without Knowledge we cannot think duly of Christ, with respect to what he is in himself; and without Faith we cannot duly think of Christ, with respect to what he is to us, so as to receive the Reward of God, namely, 'That God hath given us eternal Life, and this Life is in his Son,' 1 John v. 11. Which Record 'whosoever believeth not, hath made God a Liar,' ver. 10. That the Question concerns this believing Thought of Christ, is plain from the Context, wherein Christ shows they had but unworthy Thoughts of him, if they did not see him to be *David's* Lord, that is, the

True God and Eternal Life; in and through Whom, as the God-Man, this Life was to be conveyed from God to Man. This Question then is a Trial of our Faith, which Faith is the Evidence of things not seen. And, I suppose, one of the Reasons why Christ here says, *What think ye of Christ?* and not, *What think ye of me?* is, Because tho' now they were speaking to him, and seeing him with their bodily Eyes; yet their Faith was not to terminate on what was the Object of their Sense. We have no more Faith than an Ox or a Horse, if we believe no more than we see and feel: The Brute-beasts think they have what they find they have by Seeing and Feeling; but what do you, that are rational Creatures, think of Things that cannot be seen or felt? 'Faith is the Evidence of Things not seen.' The *Pharisees* here, they saw Christ, they saw his Miracles; but yet, for all that, they saw not the true Christ by Faith, while they saw not his invisible Glory, his invisible Godhead, nor the invisible Seal appended to his Commission for saving Sinners. Therefore it is not, *What think ye of me?* Your Eyes see me, as if I were no more but a Man like yourselves: But, *What think ye of Christ?* Do you believe no more of Christ than you see? If so, then you have no right Thoughts of Christ at all, because you have no Faith. My Friends, the Question concerns you also: It is not, What see or feel you of Christ? but, *What believe you of Christ?* There is a threefold Seeing or Feeling, that is to be separate from Believing. The *First* is a *Corporeal* Seeing or Feeling: *Thomas* thought it a better Way to believe Christ to be risen, by seeing and feeling him, than by running to the Promises without Sight of him; and we all naturally follow him: But Christ tells him, that the best and most blessed Way was quite contrary to that, *John* xx. 29. 'Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.' Again, *2dly*, There is a *Rational* Seeing, that is to be separate from Believing. Tho' none can believe, without the Exercise of their rational Faculties spiritualized; and tho' it be the highest Reason

Reason to believe what God speaks ; yet to make natural Reason the Rule or Ground of Faith, is not to believe at all, but the Way to doubt of all that ever God said. *Thomas* consulted with Reason, and Reason consulted with Death and the Grave, whether they could send their Guests away back and alive again into the World ; and so he believed not. If *Abraham* had not separated the Sight of Reason from his Faith in the promised Seed, where would his Faith have been ? Natural Reason might say, Hark you, *Abraham*, Is it possible that you and *Sarah* can now have a Son betwixt you, when you're both come to such an Age, that you're but dead Stocks ? But, when Reason began to speak, *Abraham* stopt his Ears ; he considered not the Deadness of his own Body, nor of *Sarah's* Womb, *Rom. iv. 19, 20, 21.* ' He staggered not at the Promise of God through Unbelief, but was strong in the Faith, giving Glory to God, being fully persuaded that he that had promised was able to perform.' It may be, Reason is whispering into the Ears of some here, saying, O Man, Woman, you're but a dead Stock, a dead Stone ; Do you ever think to be a Child of *Abraham*, or that you'll bring forth Fruit unto God ? But, if you believe with *Abraham*, you'll say, Hold your Peace, Carnal Reason, you're but a blind Fool in the Matters of God : Cannot God out of Stones raise up Children to *Abraham* ? And as he is able, so he hath given me many Promises in his Word, which he allows me to build upon, and commands me to believe. Unbelief builds ay upon Sense and Reason, but Faith builds upon the Power and Promise of God ; What believe you of Christ ? 3dly, There is a *Spiritual* Seeing that is to be separated from Faith. It is true, there is a spiritual Seeing of sanctified Knowledge and Understanding, which I spoke of already, that is essential to Faith ; there can be no Believing without this Seeing : ' He that sees the Son, and believes in him, hath everlasting Life.' But there is a spiritual Seeing of Experience, or experimental Sense and Feeling, which is to be separate from Believing ; such as spiri-

tual Mourning, spiritual Joy, spiritual Enlargement, or such like Workings of the Spirit. Where these are, they should indeed be cherished with Thankfulness, as being a Taste of Heaven, and a comfortable Means of glorifying God on Earth: But it is dangerous to make them the Ground of Faith; for they are ebbing and flowing, up and down, it may be Twenty Times in the Space of one Sermon; and your Faith that is built thereupon will be up and down therewith. If you believe no longer than you see and feel, no wonder that you be ay doubting when you are not feeling. And so you're never living by Faith; for you're not properly believing, when you're feeling; Faith is one Thing, and Feeling another; Or, if you build partly on the Feeling of God's Work within you, and partly on the Truth of God's Word without you, then you're like One that would build a House partly on thawing Ice, and partly on a firm Rock; surely that Part of the House, that was built on the Ice, will tumble down whenever the Ice melts: But, were the Building of Faith wholly upon the firm Rock, that changes not with the Changes of your Sense and Feeling, you will find no more Cause of Doubting when you have, than when you want these changeable Things; you would be thankful when you have them, and yet not doubtful when you want them. Unbelief, which builds upon Things seen and felt, says and thinks, in the Want of these, O all is good, and so razeth the Foundation; but Faith, which *is the Evidence of Things not seen*, says, even in the Want of these, All is yet well and secure, Christ is what he was, the Promise is what it was, the Truth of God is what it was, however I be changed. These are the different Thoughts of Faith and Unbelief; and what think ye? I trow, when the Meaning of the Question is, What believe ye of Christ? the most Part will find, that either they have no Faith, or very little.

Thus *Paul* believed contrary to Sense and Feeling, when he got the Promise of his own Life, and the Life of all that were in the Ship with him, *Acts xxvii. 25.*
I believe God, says he, that it shall be even as it was
told.

told me. See in what Circumstances he was, when he thus believed, *Verses 15, 18, 20.* their Light was gone, the Tempest was on them, and all Hope from outward Appearances was gone; yet *Paul* was assured and persuaded that God would do as he had said: Why, might Unbelief say, if the Sun were shining, and a fair Wind blowing, if the Sun of Righteousness were shining on me, and the Wind of heavenly Influences blowing, and I were fair before the Wind, then I would believe: But now, when there is nothing but Darkness and Tempests, How can I believe? No indeed, you cannot, while you make Sense and Feeling the Ground of your Faith, and not the Truth and Veracity of God in his Word of Grace and Promise. Thus it is in the Matter of Justification before God. The Believer is to look upon himself as righteous, through the Righteousness of Christ; to believe himself perfect in Christ, and fiducially to think himself righteous in Christ: No, says Unbelief, I cannot think that, because I feel the contrary; I feel my own Unrighteousness, Sin and Corruption: Why, if there were no Sense or Feeling of Sin, there would be no Room for Faith; If you had a Righteousness of your own, and a Feeling thereof, then you would have no Need of Christ's Righteousness; but now, that you have a Feeling of your Unrighteousness; and Sin, there is Room for Faith, according to such a Word as that, *2 Cor. v. last.* 'He hath made him to be Sin for us, that we might be made the Righteousness of God in him.' The very Essence of Faith here is to believe the quite contrary to what we see and feel in ourselves, saying, In my self I have no Righteousness, no Strength; but surely in the Lord have I Righteousness and Strength. Now, tho' I should shew no more of the Import of this Question, *What think ye of Christ?* but these Two, namely, What know ye of Christ? and what believe ye of Christ? Surely it is a Matter of eternal Consequence to answer this Question, thus explained; for if you miss the right Answer to these Two Branches of this Question, your Doom at the Great Day

Day will be dreadful, 2 *Theff.* i. 7. 8. 'He will be revealed from Heaven in flaming Fire, taking Vengeance on them that know him not, and obey not the Gospel;' that is, who never had such Thoughts of Christ, as to know him, and believe in him as the Christ of God. Again,

(3.) *What think ye of Christ?* That is, What love ye of Christ, and what Favour have ye for him? As they that know him will believe and put their Trust in him; so they that believe in him will love him, for Faith works by Love. It must be a loving Thought, that Christ here intended by this Question, while in the Context he sets forth himself, not only as *David's* Son, but *David's* Lord, a God-Man, and so a glorious Object of Love, altogether lovely. Were our Affections enlarged wider than the highest Heaven, there is Loveliness enough in a God-Man to fill it; and, could our Hearts hold an Ocean of Love, there is infinite Loveliness in Christ to bestow it all upon: Every Thing in Christ is lovely; and therefore the Question, *What think ye of Christ?* must be, What love ye of Christ? If any Man love not our Lord Jesus Christ, let him be *Anathema Maran-atha*, says the Apostle; surely they are not Believers, that are not Lovers of Christ. It is true, Christ hath many pretended Lovers, that love him only for his Bounty, but not for his Beauty, and that say they love him; but it is not so, if you consider the Qualities of their Love. 1st, It is an *easy* Love, they came easily by it, without ever getting their natural Enmity discovered or broken: They were never humbled for their Want of Love; such a Love is not worth a Farthing. Or, 2^{dly}, It is an *idle* Love, it does not lead them to his Service, nor draw them to their Prayers; his Commands are still grievous to them. Or, 3^{dly}, If it be not an idle, it is a *legal* Love: It may be the Law comes to them, and says, as *Pharaoh* said to the *Israelites*, Ye are idle, ye are idle, *Exod.* v. 17. and so they fall adoring for their Life, according to the *Do* and *Live* of the first Covenant. But it is not Doing from love to Christ:

Christ : It is not a Gospel-Love to him as a *Law-fulfiller*, but a legal Love to him as only a *Law-giver*, and as if he was still standing upon the old Covenant Terms with them. Or, *ayh*, If it be not a legal Love, it is a *loose* and *licentious* Love they have to him : It is Love with a Latitude, allowing as much Room for the Devil as for Christ, as much Room for the World as for Christ, and as much Room for Lusts : Surely they that have no other Love to Christ, but such an easy, idle, legal, loose or licentious Love, they are not true Lovers ; nay, they are true Haters of him, and Enemies to him. Let them say as they will, that they love Christ, yet they think nothing of him. But, Believer, What think you of Christ ? When the Meaning of the Question to you is, *Simon Son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these ?* O, can you answer it with an Appeal, *Thou that knowest all Things, knowest that I love thee ?* or at least, can you answer it with a Sigh, *Wo's me that I cannot love him as I ought ?* Surely, if you have not a Love of Delight rejoicing in him, ye have a Love of Desire lamenting after him. Sometimes the loving Soul goes to a Communion, and the secret Grone is, O let me find Christ at this Occasion ! O I must have him, I must have him ? Why *must* you have him ? Even because he must have you, *John x. 16.* ' Other Sheep I have, which are not of this Fold ; these also I *MUST* bring, and they shall hear my Voice.' He hath said first, I *must* have you ; and that hath brought you to say, I *must* have him. Here are two Necessities meeting, his Necessity and your Necessity ; his Necessity indeed is a pure Necessity of *Love*, but your first Necessity was the Necessity of *Want* : But, since he from *Love* hath a Need of you, as well as you from *Want* have a Need of him, you must of Necessity meet together in Love. You love him, because he first loved you ; you seek him, because he first sought you : Therefore henceforth, as he seeks you from Love, so do you not only seek him from Want, that is too selfish ; but also let your Way of seeking him grow
up

up to more Conformity to his Way of seeking you, namely, from Love, saying, *Saw ye him whom my Soul loveth? Tell him that I am sick of Love.* O what think ye, what love ye of Christ? Again,

(4.) *What think ye of Christ?* That is, What esteem ye of Christ, or what Estimate and Valuation have you for him? This is plainly imported in the Question here. Why, might Christ say, ye Pharisees are shewing your ignorant Esteem of the Law, by all the Questions you are proposing about it; but what think ye of Christ, who is the Lord of the Law, as well as *David's* Son and Lord? You have an ignorantly high Opinion of *Moses*, but what think ye of Christ? what Honour and Respect do you put upon him? Surely, *to them that believe he is precious*; or, as the Word imports, he is *honourable*. Where there is true Knowledge of Christ, there is Faith; where there is Faith, there is Love; and where there is Love, there is a high Esteem. Some Things, the more they are known, the less they are esteemed: But it is not so with Christ; they that know him most, do esteem him most; God the Father knows him best, and he esteems him most highly, *Isa. xlii. 1.* Saints and Angels in Heaven know him next best, and how they esteem him, you may see, *Rev. v. 8, 10, 11, 12.* The more that any on Earth knows him, the more do they esteem him; and only these that do not know him, do not esteem him, *1 Cor. i. 21, 22, 23, 24.* They that are best Judges, think highly of Christ. What judge ye, what Esteem have ye of him? There is a fourfold Lodging or Room that the Esteem of Christ hath in the Souls of them that duly esteem him. 1. In their *Intellective* Faculty, that is, in their Understanding this Esteem lodges, saying, O I determine to know nothing but Christ! O Sirs, if a Man had the Knowledge of all the Universities in the World centred in him, and yet know not Christ, he is but a poor silly Sot. *Paul*, brought up at the Feet of *Gamaliel*, had a great deal of Knowledge and human Literature; but whenever he came to know Christ, O, says he, *I count all but Dung.*

*Dung for the Excellency of the Knowledge of Christ Je-
sus my Lord,* 2. In their *Elective* Faculty, that is in
their Choice does this Esteem lodge. O they that e-
steem Christ, they select and single him out for a
Head and Husband, with whom they resolve to live
and die, saying, 'Whom have I in Heaven but thee?'
'and there is none upon the Earth that I desire besides
'thee.' 3. In their *Prosecutive* Faculty, that is, in
their Affections does this Esteem lodge, these do ar-
dently and vehemently pursue after him: As nothing
can satisfy a hungry Man but Food, so nothing satis-
fies such a Soul but Christ; hence proceeds their In-
dustry in the Use of Means and Ordinances. 4. In
their *Retentive* Faculty, that is, in their Memory
will this Esteem also lodge; while their Esteem of
him makes them remember him, and their Meditati-
on of him to be sweet. *When I remember thee upon
my Bed, and meditate on thee in the Night-watch-
es, my Soul shall be satisfied as with Marrow and Fat-
ness, and my Mouth shall praise thee with joyful Lips,*
Psal. lxiii. 5, 6. What we love and esteem, will
have a Lodging in our Minds and Thoughts. And
where does the Strain of our Thoughts and Medita-
tions run? is, no doubt, implied in this Question,
What think ye of Christ? What Room do you give
him in your Heart and Thoughts? Now these four
Particulars, namely, 1. What *know* ye, 2. What
believe ye, 3. What *love* ye, 4. What *esteem* ye of
Christ? are here implied.

The *Third* Thing here proposed was, to shew the
Import of this Question formally considered, with re-
spect to the Quality of the Act. I have shewed what
may be implied in this Question, with relation to the
Object, and also the Act of Thinking: Now the
interrogative Particle *What*, pointing at the Quality
of this Act, may furnish us with some further
Thoughts anent the Import of the Question, formal-
ly considered. It is the *What* in the Text that now
I am especially upon; and besides the General,
What is your Opinion of Christ, What is your Judg-
F ment

ment about Christ? there is a fourfold *What* here implied. (1.) What *Good* do you think of him: You Pharisees think much Good of yourselves; Who but you, and your Righteousness, your Alms, your Sacrifices, your Temple, your Zeal for *Moses* and the Law? But, *What think ye of Christ?* Is he no more in your View than a mortal Son of a mortal Man? No wonder then, in this Case, you think little Good of him. Can you ascend no higher in your Contemplation to apprehend him as the Immortal Son of the Immortal God, the Eternal Son of the Eternal Father, the Righteousness of God, the Gift of God, the true Sacrifice, the true Temple, the Antitype of all the Types, the Substance of all the Shadows, the Fulness of all the Prophecies and Promises? What, do you think him good for nothing, but to be despised, debased, and trampled upon? What Good do you think of him?

(2.) What *Glory* do you think to be in him? Do you not darken his Glory, when you look upon him only to be the Son of *David*, and not also to be the Lord of *David*, and the Lord of Glory, the Root and Offspring of *David*; not only the Offspring of *David* as Man, but the Root of *David* as God? What think ye of him as the Glory of God, and the God of Glory, bringing in a Dispensation much more glorious than that of *Moses*, which Glory was to be done away, 2 Cor. iii. 7, 8, 9. Christ, as the Sent of God, being anointed with the Spirit for that End. If the Ministration of Death written and engraven on Stones was glorious, how shall not the Ministration of the Spirit be rather glorious? If the Ministration of Condemnation be Glory, much more does the Ministration of Righteousness exceed in Glory. And what Glory do you think to be in Christ, who is the Glory of all this Glory? Do you see Christ to be thus glorious, and me to be the Christ? Tho' now, might he say, this Glory is under a Vail of Flesh, a Vail of Exinanition and Humiliation; yet this mean Appearance that I'm making now, as if I were no more but a frail mortal Man, was clearly foretold to you by the Prophets

phets concerning Christ, even that he should be a Man, and a Man of Sorrows: Can you see nothing of my Glory and Excellency under this Vail? Is there no Glory in the Sun, because there is a Cloud betwixt you and it? 3. What *Use* do you think he is of? for, if he were only the Son of *David*, he could be of no great Usefulness to a perishing World of Sinners: But, do you think and consider, that herein is the Mystery of Divine Grace? 'God so loved the World, that he sent his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have everlasting Life.' If the Brasen Serpent, which was but a Type of Christ, was of Use to the stung *Israelites*, what think you of Christ? Can any Thing in the World be so useful to Sinners as Christ? Of what Use is the Law, whereof you're boasting? It is but a dead Letter, a killing Word, a Sentence of Condemnation, a Death-summons, a dead Warrant against them without Christ, who is the *End of the Law for Righteousness*. Who but Christ can reconcile God to Man, and ingratiate Man with God? Who but he can fulfil the Law and satisfy Justice for them, pay their Debts, heal their Diseases, justify, sanctify, and save them, vanquish Sin, Death and Hell for them, and at last raise the mouldered Carcase from Corruption to Incorruption, and invest it with a State of everlasting Glory in the highest Heaven, with '*Fulness of Joy, and Pleasures for evermore at his Right-hand?*' Is he an useless Christ to you, tho' he fills All in all, and alone can give abundant Satisfaction to the immortal Soul, whereas all Things else are but dry and empty without him, and leave Men destitute? O dry Means, dry Ministers, dry Ordinances, dry Sacraments, dry Sermons and dry Prayers, if Christ be away! O dry Breasts, if he be not the Milk; dry Branches, if he be not the Sap; dry Clouds, dry Wells, if he be not the Water! O what Use think ye he is for? what Work and Service have ye for him? 4. What *Worth* do you think he is of? Your Thoughts are employed, might Christ say, how to tempt me with your Questions about the Law,

undervaluing that Lord God that gave the Law, and that now is come in the Person of the *Messias* to fulfil the Law; and is he unworthy to have a Room in your Thoughts? or what Worth do you think him of? If you judge rightly and think duly of him, you'll find he hath more real Worth than all the World beside: For, put all the Creatures in Heaven and Earth in one Scale, and Christ in another, you'll find them all to be lighter than Vanity. This is plain, if you consider, that when all the World of Men and Angels, and Creatures were weighed in the Balance with Divine Justice, they were found too light to counterpoise it, or give Satisfaction to it; all they together could not make up the full Sum or Value that should satisfy that Justice: It cost more to redeem a Soul, than all that they were worth; 'The Redemption of the Soul is precious, and ceases for ever,' says the Psalmist. But Christ, having unsearchable Riches, is a Mass of Treasure big enough for the Purpose; and therefore, when he was laid in the Balance with infinite Justice, he was found of Weight enough to poise it, without any Creature's Help to hold down the Scale: Nay, 'He looked, and there was none to help, none to uphold; therefore his own Arm brought Salvation. And he trode the Winepress alone, and of the People there were none with him,' Isa. lxiii. 3. 5. Who among the Creatures could go thorow conquering and to conquer, as Christ did, when he had Heaven, Earth and Hell to grapple with? What think ye of Christ then? what Worth do you think he is of? Upon the whole, before I leave this Point, let me ask these two Questions, to bring home this one, concerning what Worth do you think Christ is of. The first Question is, What Price would you buy him at, if you were to buy him? Surely, if you had a due Thought of Christ, and a Discovery of the Pearl, you would for Joy sell your *All* to buy it, *Matth.* xiii. 44, 45, 46. And when all is done, you would see your *All* to be nothing at all, and the Pearl to be *All in all*. Indeed this Treasure is so great, this Pearl is so precious, that it cannot

be bought at any Price; and therefore the Price of it is, *No Money, no Price*, altogether free, *Iſa. lv. 1.* To buy here, is to beg, and take freely; yet, if the Question be, 'What would ye give for him, if he were to be bought?' Surely, if you knew your own Need, and his infinite Fulneſs and Suitableneſs for you, the Question will ſuggeſt ſome great Thought of Chriſt. O a thouſand thouſand Worlds, if I had them, would I give for him! Yea, but there are ſome that hold him at a very low Price, they would not give a Groat or a Sixpence for Chriſt or his Intereſt, they would not part with a Shilling or a Crown for Chriſt or his Cauſe, Chriſt or his Goſpel; nay, they will not part with a beaſtly Luſt for him, their Idols and the World are of greater Price to them. But there are Others that know his Worth better, and are willing to forſake all for him, *Matth. xix. 27. We have forſaken all, and followed thee*; the holy Martyrs thought not their Lives and their Hearts-blood too dear for Chriſt, *Rev. xii. 11. They loved not their Lives unto the Death*, that is, they deſpiſed their Lives in Compariſon of Chriſt, they expoſed their Bodies to horrible and painful Deaths, their temporal Eſtates to the Spoil, taking joyfully the Spoiling of their Goods, and expoſing their Perſons to all Manner of Shame and Contempt for the Cauſe of Chriſt. O but a Soul that by Faith apprehends the Worth of Chriſt, will cheerful'y and willingly give all for him; and, having won Chriſt, will go away rejoicing, and think his Pennyworth to be very good, very great! The ſecond Question is, *What Rate would ye ſell him at, if ye were to ſell him?* Judas ſold him, and the High Priests bought him for Thirty Pieces of Silver, *A goodly Price that I was prized at of them. Zech. xi. 13.* It is ironically ſpoken, *A bonny Price indeed for a God-Man*; caſt it to the Potter, ſays the Lord. Men of darkned Uunderſtandings, corrupt Minds, and depraved Affections, will ſell Chriſt and his Cauſe, Chriſt and a good Conſcience for a Trifle: yea, many betray his Cauſe for ſome poor worldly Com-

Confideration. O for such a Spirit as I read of in the Forty Martyrs, that suffered so valiantly under *Licinius*, Anno 300, that when *Agriolani* his Deputy, one of the Devil's Agents, set upon them several Ways to draw them to deny Christ, and at last tempted them with an Offer of Money and Preferment, they all cried out with one Consent, [Gr. O aidiotes, O adiotes, chremata dides ta apomenonta ;] O Eternity, Eternity, give us Money that will last to Eternity, and Gold that will abide for ever, such as Christ can give us: They slighted that pitiful Wealth which was current only in this beggarly World, when coming in Competition with Christ and his durable Riches ; they would not sell Christ for a World, nay not for a World of Worlds. O at what Rate would you sell Christ ! Surely, if you think duly and highly of him, you'll buy him at any Rate, but sell him at no Rate. It is easy indeed to frame a passing Thought, O who would put Christ in the Balance with any Thing ! But stay till a Day of Trial come, and the Question he brought closs home, *Now, will you quit Christ and his Cause, or will you quit with Father and Mother, and Wife and Children, and Estate and Fortune, Houses and Yards, and Life and all ?* I trow that would be a hard Question ; *Skin for Skin, and all that a Man hath will he give for his Life,* he will quit all before he quit with his Life. Surely, if Christ be your Life, you would quit all other Lives for him, a natural Life, a temporal Life, a Life of Pleasure, a Life of Honour, a Life of Ease and worldly Accommodations ; and if you think much of him, there is some Life you have quit for him already, at least in Part, and in Desire and Endeavour, namely, a Life of Sin, a Life of Self, a Life of legal Righteousness, that the Life you live may be a Life of Faith on the Son of God. Now, I suppose all these *What's* are imported in the Question, 1. What *Good* do you think of him ? 2. What *Glory* do you think to be in him ? 3. What *Use* do you think he is for ? 4. What *Worth* do you think he is of, when he

he is to be bought or sold? This Question bears all these in its Bosom, *What think ye of Christ?*

The 4th and last Thing proposed upon the Explanation of the Import of the Question, was, to shew the Import of it, subjectively considered, or with respect to the Persons that are the Subjects thereof, or to whom the Question is put, in the Pronoun *ye*, *What think ye of Christ?* And under this Consideration we may take a fourfold View of the Question, (1.) View it as it was put to the *Jews* in general, for so were these to whom Christ is here speaking, Ye that are *Jews*, what think ye of Christ? Ye that are the People of whom, concerning the Flesh, Christ came, for (as ye own concerning Christ) he is the Son of *David*; and ye are the People to whom he and his Gospel behoved first to come, for Salvation is of the *Jews*, *John* iv. 22. Ye are his own People, and what think ye of Christ? Alas, 'He came to his own, and his own received him not,' they thought nothing of him when he came; and therefore, as *Paul* says, *Acts* xxviii. 28. 'The Salvation of God is sent to the Gentiles,' and he adds, *They will hear it*. Now, of Consequence, Christ and the Gospel, and this Question with it, comes to you, *Gentiles*, saying, what think ye of Christ? O will ye think nothing of him; or will ye make *Paul* a Liar, who said ye should hear it; or rather, will ye give the Lie to the Spirit of God? Nay, whatever the most part do, yet 'as many as were ordained to eternal Life' will be brought to think highly of Christ, by getting the saving Knowledge, Faith, Love and Esteem of him. (2.) View the Question as it was put to the *Pharisees*, a set of Hypocrites and Self-righteous Persons; Ye that are *Pharisees*, what think ye of Christ? Ye are strict Observers of the Letter of the Law, and think much of your long Prayers, your giving Alms of all that you possess, your Fasting twice a Week, your being no open Drunkards, Whoremongers, Extortioners, nor like this or that Publican; but while you think so much of yourselves and your own Righteousness

teousness, and think nothing of Christ, *Publicans and Harlots go into the Kingdom before you* ; therefore, what think ye of Christ the Son of *David*, the Lord of *David*, the Lord of the Law, by whom alone *everlasting Righteousness is brought in*, answering the Spirit, and not the Letter of the Law only ? The Question then comes to be proposed to all of the same Kidney with these *Pharisees* ; Ye that are Hypocrites and self-justifying Persons, what think ye of Christ ? Ye that are thinking, O you're an honest Man, you have ay been a good Neighbour, just in your Dealing, civil in your Carriage, and so you fancy yourself to be touching the Law blameless ; What, Man are you content to be judged by the Law ? then to *Cæsar* let us go, to the Law let us go ; but only look the law broad in the Face, look not only to the Out side of the Law, like a Man looking only to the Back and Out-side of a Looking-glass, or to the Frame and Edge of it, where he does not see himself ; but look to the In-side of the Looking-glass of the Law, to the Spirituality of it ; set your Face to the Face of the Glass, and as you will see what a deformed filthy Creature you are, so you will find it cursing you to your Face, and cursing you to Hell for every wicked Thought as well as Action, saying, *Cursed is every one that continues not in all Things written in the Book of the Law to do them*. Therefore you have need to think again, and think better than ever you did, about a Law-justifying Righteousness, and to think there is need of this Question, *What think ye of Christ ?* (3.) View the Question as it was put to the *Sadducees* ; for it seems they were combined with the *Pharisees* here against Christ, if you compare *Vers. 23, & 34*. Now, these *Sadducees* were a Sett of People that denied the Immortality of the Soul, the Resurrection of the Body, the Existence of Spirits and Angels, *Acts xxiii. 8*. in a word they were half Atheists, if not wholly so, like the graceless Wits of our Day, that call themselves *Free thinkers* : Well, says Christ, what think ye of Christ ? whose Son is he ? If you could view him as
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not only *David's* Son, but *David's* Lord and God ; and as the God of *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jacob*, not the God of the Dead, but of the Living ; would you persist in these Atheistical Tenets, concerning the Resurrection of the Body, the Being of Souls ? No, no. The Question then is applicable to all that Sort of People : Ye that are *Atheists*, *Deists*, and damnably erroneous *Free-thinkers*, O what think ye of Christ ? No Doubt, with *Herod* and his Men of War, you set him at nought : But O, will you think again and recal your Thoughts ? let them fix upon Christ a while, and you shall find all the Truths of the Bible cleared and vindicated, by him who is the Truth itself ; and that this eternal Son of God is sent from the Father, of Purpose to confirm them by his Doctrine, Life, Death and Resurrection. Again, (4.) View the Question, with Respect to its general Design, which is (together with all other Scriptures) the Profit of all to whom it comes, for their Reproof, Correction, or Instruction in Righteousness, 2 *Tim.* iii. 16. and for convincing of Sinners, or confirming of Saints : And so it comes to all and every one of us, Ministers or People, High and Low, Rich and Poor, what think ye of Christ ? And here I have Occasion to look round about me, and ask the Question at all and every one that hears me ; and indeed we may begin first at ourselves. O we that are Ministers, what think we of Christ ? Is he the Son and Lord of *David*, the eternal Son of God ? Surely we cannot think, or speak, or preach too much of Christ. It is our Honour, if we can say, We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord ; and that to us, who are the least of all Saints (may some of us say) should this grace be given, to preach among the *Gentiles* the Unsearchable Riches of Christ : But, while we speak of Christ to others, what do we think of Christ ourselves ? To be sure, if we do not think of Christ as we ought, we will not speak of Christ as we ought. Christ in the Heart, and Christ in the Mouth, make right Preaching. If any preach Christ out of Envy, as the Apostle says, it is

well that Christ is preached ; but as it must be but heartless bungling Work to such, so they would do well to consider, that the Question is not, What preach ye of Christ ? but, What think ye of Christ ? Again, O ye that are the People, What think ye of Christ ? whatever be your State or Condition, Sex or Quality, the Question comes to you ; and let none of you dare to neglect the pondering on it, when Christ himself is posing you with it, what think ye of Christ ? Ye that are Magistrates, or in Places of Power, Trust and Authority, what think ye of Christ ? Are you employing your Power for Christ, and his Cause and Interest ? Ye that are Masters, or Mistresses of Families, what think ye of Christ ? Is it the Language of your Soul, As for me and my House we will serve the Lord ? Are you desiring with *Abraham* to command your Children, and your Household after you, to keep the Ways of the Lord, and praying for them, and instructing them in the Knowledge of Christ ? Again, Ye that are Children under your Parents, O what think ye of Christ ? Whose Son is he ? Do you know him to be the Son of *David*, and the Son of GOD too ? And would it not be your great Happiness, to be the Sons and Children of God in him ? Your Father and Mother may die, and leave you, therefore it is your best to seek an Interest in him to be your everlasting Father.

Ye that are Servants, what think ye of Christ ? Would you have him for your Master and Lord ? Is it not the greatest Honour to be his Servants, who is *David's* Lord ? He that was *David's* Son, was *David's* Master ; and as *David* in Spirit called him Lord, so, should not all that is within you call him Lord ? Serve your Masters honestly, but let him who is the Lord of Lords be a Master above all Masters to you. Ye that are Tradesmen, what think ye of Christ ? Have you no Trading with Heaven ? Does your Civil Trade in a World take up all your Thoughts ? Surely it is either an unlawful Trade, or unlawfully used, that cannot consist with this Christian Trade of giving the Chief of your Thoughts to him, that is the Chief among
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Ten thousand. Ye that are Husbandmen, what think ye of Christ? Do you think more of your Ploughs and Oxen, or Corn and Cattle, and Barns and Goods, than of glorious Christ? Do you not know, whether you be Tenants, Feuars or Freeholders, that you are Tenants to him, and hold your All of him? Are you more taken up in thinking of a great Crop, or a good Harvest, than of him who is the Lord of the Harvest, both in a natural and spiritual Sense, and Lord of all that you have? Ye that are mean Cotters, what think ye of Christ? Wo's me, does your Cote-house, and your Cow, and your Kail-yard, ly nearer your Heart than precious Christ? O! if you were acquainted with Communion with him, you would find a mean Cottage with Christ better than a princely Palace without him. Ye that are poor Beggars, what think ye of Christ? To the Poor the Gospel is preached; to you is Christ and his unsearchable Riches offered; but I fear there are some of you think more of a Half-penny than you think of Christ: Everlasting Poverty and Misery will be your Portion, if your Thoughts be not changed and renewed. You come to Communion-Occasions only to beg Alms, not knowing that then you are at the *Beautiful Gate* of the Temple, where you might get an Alms that would enrich you for ever. You have the Art of begging from Men, and from Door to Door, but perhaps you never think of begging at Christ's Door: O will you begin to think, and to think of Christ, before the Door of Mercy be shut! Again, ye that are rich, and wealthy in the World, What think ye of Christ? Hath he given you Riches, think you, to steal away your Hearts from him, or rather to improve them for, and consecrate them to his Honour, and for the Good of others, especially of the Household of Faith? Men may court your Favour, but you are to be pitied, as a poor, miserable Wretch, if you have your Portion only in this Life; tho' you had all the Gold of *Ophir*, without Christ you have nothing but a Shadow, you are destitute of the true Substance. You

that are wise, mighty or noble, what think ye of Christ? May it not startle you a little, that he hath said, Not many wise Men after the Flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called; but God hath chosen the foolish, weak, base and despicable Things of the World: You have no Reason to despair, for he hath not said *not any* of them; but yet you have Reason to think where you are, for he hath said *not many* of them: And indeed, as an Evidence of this, look to the great Men of our Day, you'll see, that the Generality of the Nobility and Gentry of *Scotland and England*, they think very little of Christ. You that are Scholars and Students, what think ye of Christ? what will all the Wisdom and Literature, liberal Arts and Sciences, and best Accomplishments in the World avail you, without Christ? They will qualify you to be more eminent Servants to the Devil, and his Interest, if you learn not Christ together with them. You may be Students of *Latin, Greek and Hebrew*, Students of Philosophy, Astronomy, Astrology, Geography, and Mathematicks, yea, and Students of Divinity too; and yet lose all your Pains, if you do not study Christ. Ye that are ignorant and illiterate Persons, what think ye of Christ? It may be ye cannot read the Bible; you was never at a School: your Parents died when you were young, or else were poor, and could not, or graceless, and would not set you to the School; or if you can read, that is all: You know not so much as the first Principles of the Doctrine of Christ, and can hardly tell whose Son he is. If you could be brought this Day to think highly of Christ, then should you know, and follow on to know the Lord. O neglect not henceforth the Means of the Knowledge of Christ; if you learn of him, he will make you wiser than the rest of the World, for as far behind as you are, even wise unto Salvation. Ye that are old Men and Women, what think ye of Christ? How many Thousands and Millions of Thoughts have you bestowed upon the Devil, the World and your Lusts, and Idols in your Time, which would have been better bestowed upon Christ, and

and the Concerns of your eternal Salvation? And now, that Death, Judgment and Eternity are hard at Hand, O, how can you think of going down to the Grave, and in to an everlasting State, without being in Case to answer this Question to Purpose, *What think ye of Christ?* Ye that are young Men and Women, what think ye of Christ? Ye are now in the Flower of your Age; O, shall not Christ have the Flower of your Thoughts, that according to the Father's Promise to him, he may have the Dew of his Youth, by your Dedicating to him the Dew of your Youth, and fleeing all youthful Lusts? Ye that are Bairns and Little-ones, Lads and Lasses, Boys and Girls, capable to think, O what think ye of Christ? Alas, Bairns (to say a Word to you) you may see what ill Hearts you have, that make you think more of little Plays and Trifles, Nignays, and Butterflies, than you think of Christ: You mind any Thing sooner than your Creator or Redeemer, whom God calls you to remember in the Days of your Youth. Therefore, after this, when you are playing, will you think more of praying? for God says, *I love them that love me, and they that seek me early shall find me*: And think more of reading the Bible, like young *Timothy*, who, from a Child, knew the holy Scriptures. In a Word, if there be any Body here that thinks I have mist them, know that the Question is to all and every one of you, *What think ye of Christ?* O graceless World! How unworthily do you think of Christ? The covetous Man thinks more of a groat than of Christ, like *Demas*. Ambitious Men think more of a Hat than of Christ; like *Haman*, or as *Saul*, who said to *Samuel*, Honour me before the People. The voluptuous Man thinks more of a base Lust, than of Christ. The Drunkard thinks more of a hearty Cup, than of Christ. The glutton thinks more of a hearty Meal, than of Christ. The proud Man thinks more of himself, than of Christ. Pride of Righteousness thinks more of Prayers, and Attendance on Ordinances, than of Christ. Pride of Grace thinks more of a good Frame.

Frame, than of Christ. Pride of Wisdom thinks more of a Witticism, or of a fine Discourse, than of Christ. Pride of Beauty thinks more of a Skin-deep Complexion, than of Christ. Pride of Bravery thinks more of a fine Suit of clothes, than of Christ, tho' the silly Sheep wore it on her Back before them. Behold how Christ is vilified and undervalued in the World! But, O Believer, What think ye of Christ? Surely, if you be a gracious Person, Christ will be to you a precious Person; and you'll wonder at the Folly and Madness of the World, that sets every Thing above Christ, in their Thoughts and Esteem: Why, they are ignorant of Christ, and ignorant of themselves; if they were convinced of their Sin and Misery, they would think much of a Saviour and Redeemer; if they knew their Disease, they would think much of such a Physician to heal them; if they knew their Nakedness, they would think much of such a Garment to clothe them; if they knew their Pollution, they would think much of such a Fountain to wash them; if they knew their deep Arrears to Divine Justice, and Dyvour-state, they would think much of such a Surety to pay their Debt. Surely, if they knew, they would not thus despise the Lord of Glory. However, be it known to all and every one of you, that this Question is put to you; and you ought to put it to yourselves, before God, by discovering what you are, and where you stand. And now, having opened the Import of the Question, in the several Branches of it, I proceed next to.

THIRD HEAD.

The *Third* general Head proposed, namely, to offer some Reasons of the Doctrine, why this is the great leading Question in the Christian Catechism, by which People are to try themselves; or why this Question is put as a Touchstone, for discovering what Mettal we are of, *What think ye of Christ?* Why,

1. This Question is put, *What think ye of Christ?* because, without right Thoughts of Christ, there is no right Thought of God; and without the Knowledge

ledge of Christ, there is no true Knowledge of God. God is an invisible God, and Christ only *is the Image of the invisible God*, Col. 1. 15. There are three Ways to know, see and apprehend God : One is, by the Creatures he hath made, Rom. i. 20. *The invisible Things of God are clearly seen from the Creation of the World, even his eternal Power and Godhead* : Another is by the Scriptures, for they make God known ; but the Third and only saving Way of knowing and apprehending God, is by Christ. Now, the Knowledge of God, that we have by the Creatures, is like the Knowledge we have of a Man by his Workmanship, which he hath wrought : If the Workmanship be rare and excellent, such as hath required great Art and Strength, then we conceive the Man that hath done it, hath been a wise Man, a strong Man, and the like, according to the Nature of the Workmanship : So, when we know God by the Creatures, we conceive, that the God that made them, must be a great God, a wise God, a powerful God, But next, The Knowledge that we have of God by the Scriptures ; I mean, the literal Knowledge, is like that Knowledge that one gets of a famous learned Man, by reading what he writes : If in his Writing he hath discovered much Learning, vast Sense, and solid Judgment, accordingly we conceive him to be a sensible judicious Man. So, by reading the Word, we may conceive of God's Excellency, as we do of a Man by his Writing ; but the Knowledge of God, that we get by Christ, is like that Knowledge which one gets of a King, by having seen his Image, or rather his Son, who is as like him as he can look. Now, Christ is so like the Father, and so truly and really his Image, that tho' blind *Arians* cannot see the essential Glory of the Father in him, yet he says to *Philip*, *John* xiv. 9. *He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father*. Now, in the Book of the Creature we may see the Being of God, in the Book of the Scripture the Will of God : But above all these, we have another Book, written, as it were, with the Rays of the Sun,
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even Christ, whom we may call a Book, for he is still [Gr. *o Logos, tu Théou*] the Word of God ; but he is not made with Ink and Paper, he is a living Book, a living Picture and Representative of the Father, the Brightness of his Glory, and the express Image of his Person, *Heb. i. 3.* The living Knowledge of God is by Christ, *John i. 18.* and in Christ, *2 Cor. iv. 6.* And again, hence,

2. This Question is put, *What think ye of Christ ?* because. without right Thoughts of Christ, there can be no Religion, and consequently no Salvation. There is no coming to God, but in Christ, *John xiv. 6.* *I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life ; no Man cometh to the Father, but by me.* Without believing Thoughts of Christ, then we cannot worship God aright or acceptably ; for *without Faith it is impossible for to please God,* *Heb. xi. 6.* And I have shewed you already, that right Thinking is Believing ; and without believing in him, there is no Salvation : He that believes not, shall be damned ; for there is no other Name given under Heaven, whereby we must be saved, neither is there Salvation in any other, *Acts iv. 12.* A Man, that cannot think of Christ as he ought, cannot perform a religious Action as he ought : As the evil Man, out of the evil Treasure of his Heart, brings forth evil Things ; so a good Man, out of the good Treasure of his Heart, brings forth good Things, *Matt. xii. 35.* Now Christ in the Heart, by his Spirit, is indeed a good Treasure ; and as natural Thoughts produce natural Actions, carnal Thoughts carnal Actions ; so spiritual Thoughts bring forth spiritual Actions, and Christian Thoughts Christian Actions. True Religion begins and advances with the right Thoughts of God. I defy a Man that knows the Lord, to pray or worship God comfortably, without some due Apprehension of Christ ; for as in Christ alone God is well pleased, so it is in the View of Christ, or of God in him, that the Soul is well pleased.

3. This Question is put, *What think ye of Christ ?* because it is the best Rule of Self-examination, seeing,

as Mens Thoughts of Christ are; so is their State; as Men think in their Heart, so are they, *Prov. xxiii. 7.* If a Man be risen with Christ, then his Thoughts and Affections are set on Things above, where Christ sits on the right Hand of God, *Col. iii. 1, 2.* If you be Christians indeed, then you have Christ in you the Hope of Glory, *Col. i. 27.* and if Christ be in you, he will have a high Room in your Thought and Esteem; and therefore it is laid down as the best Rule of Examination, *2 Cor. xiii. 15. Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the Faith, prove your selves, know ye not your own selves, how that Christ Jesus is in you, except ye be Reprobates? If any Man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his, Rom. viii. 9.* Now, they that have the Spirit, do mind the Things of the Spirit, the Things of God, and particularly the CHRIST of God.

4. This Question is put, *What think ye of Christ?* because this Question comprehends all other Questions in Religion. After the Pharisees had done with asking their kittle Questions about the Law, Christ proposes this Question, which swallows up all their Questions, and comprehends all that is necessary to be known; and if we could answer this Question to Purpose, we would be in Case to answer all the Questions that concern both the Law and the Gospel; for Christ is the End of the Law, and the Sum of the Gospel. They that know Christ, they know where to find all the Righteousness that the Law requires, and all the Grace that the Gospel promises; and so this Question is the Compend of the *Christian Catechism*, and that not only with Respect to Knowledge, but also with Respect to Practice and Experience. Christ is the Sum of practical Godliness, for without him you can do nothing, and by him strengthening you, you can do all Things. And Christ is the Sum of experimental Religion also; that Experience is not worth much, that hath not Christ for the Sum total of it; for it is out of his Fullness we receive Grace for Grace: And when a Man can say, Beholding his Glory, I have been changed into

the same Image, it is a rich Experience. In a Word, all Questions that relate to Christian Experience may be reduced to this one, *What think ye of Christ?* If the Question be, What know ye of Conviction? What know ye of Conversion? What know ye of Illumination? What know ye of Regeneration? What know ye of Justification? What know ye of Sanctification? What Interest have ye in Christ? What Part and Portion have ye in the Son of *Jesse*? What Share have ye of his Grace, and what Hope of his Glory? All such Questions may be answered with the Answer of this, *What think ye of Christ?*

5. This Question, *What think ye of Christ?* is put, because he would, by this, put a Stop, and give a Check to all unnecessary curious Questions: They were but curious Questions at best, that the *Sadducees* and *Pharisees* had asked of Christ; but here Christ gives a Check to them, by a Question of everlasting Moment. Some, that are but witless Professors, shew a deal of Curiosity in some of their Questions, such as, *Who was Melchizedeck's Father?* and the like? but O here's a more necessary Question, *Who was Christ's Father?* what think ye of Christ, and whose Son is he? Here is an Ocean of Wisdom, that you may profitably dive into, and yet never win to the Bottom of it; for who can answer that Question about Christ's Father, *Prov. xxx. 4. What is his Name, and what is his Son's Name, if thou canst tell?*

6. This Question is put, *What think ye of Christ?* because our Thoughts are but lost, if they be not wared upon him: Till we be brought to think of Christ duly, all our Thoughts are but lost Thoughts, and vain Thoughts; O Jerusalem, *wash thine Heart from Wickedness, how long shall vain Thoughts lodge within thee?* The Lord sees the Thoughts of Men to be but Vanity; our Thoughts are like Birds flying from Mountain to Mountain, and skipping from Place to Place; and like Bairns running after Butterflies, their Pains are lost; and so are our Thoughts lost, while they are not terminate upon Christ.

7. This

7. This Question is put, *What think ye of Christ?* because there are so many mistaken Thoughts of Christ in the World; *He is despised and rejected of Men:* The World is filled with Prejudice against him saying, *Can any good Thing come out of Nazareth?* Therefore we ought to come and see, and consider what he is, and whose Son he is, that we may not run into the same common Mistake with the rest of the World, and that we may not take him for a Root cut of a dry Ground, Isa. liii. 2. *having no Form or comeliness.*

8. This Question is put to us, *What think ye of Christ?* because we have mistaken Thoughts of other Things, while we have not right Thoughts of Christ. The Pharisees had mistaken Thoughts of God and his Law. because they had not right Thoughts of Christ; therefore Christ proposes this Question. And indeed, Sirs, we mistake God, we mistake the Law, we mistake the Gospel, we mistake our selves, we mistake our Duty, we mistake every Thing, as long as we misken Christ. A Man may mistake so far, as to think that he is about his Duty to God, and yet may be fighting against God, while Christ is not known or thought upon, Acts xxvi. 9. *I verily thought that I ought to do many Things contrary to the Name of Jesus of Nazareth,* says Paul; and accordingly he was persecuting Christ in his Members; yet he thought he was doing God Service, till once Christ discovered himself, and cried to him, saying, *Saul Saul, why persecutest thou me?* Then he began to think of Christ, saying, *Who art thou, Lord?* Why, *I am Jesus whom thou persecutest.* Whenever he began to think duly of Christ, then he saw he had been in a Mistake. People may think verily they ought to do this and that against some of God's Children; but, if they had other Thoughts of Christ, they would have other Thoughts of their Duty, and would see that verily they ought not to do so. Again, Paul thought his own Righteousness Gain, before he knew Christ; but then he thought it

Loss: *What Things were Gain to me, these I counted Loss for Christ.*

9. This Question is put, *What think ye of Christ?* because thus you may come to understand what are his Thoughts of you. It is true, *His Thoughts are not our Thoughts, nor his Ways our Ways; for as the Heavens are higher than the Earth, so are his Thoughts higher than our Thoughts:* And hence he may have Thoughts of Mercy towards a poor Soul, that thinks there is nothing but Wrath in his Heart against it. But this I say, That as to your knowing and understanding of his Thoughts towards you; as, on the one Hand, a Man in a natural State cannot have high, believing and becoming Thoughts of Christ, and so cannot conclude that Christ hath any favourable Thoughts of him, while he remains thus in Unbelief and Despising of Christ; nay, he may know and understand, if he remain in that State thoughtless of Christ, and disregarding him, that Christ will come in flaming Fire and take Vengeance on him, *2 Thes. i. 7, 8.* So, on the other Hand, the Man that hath got such Discoveries of Christ, as to create high, spiritual and elevated Thoughts of Christ, he may from thence understand, that Christ thinks well of him, and that his Thoughts towards him are Thoughts of Peace and not of Evil; to give him an expected End. It is true, Christ's Thoughts of the Believer are not up and down, high and low, as the Believer's Thoughts of him are; nay, Christ's Thoughts are unchangeably the same: But, when the Believer's Thoughts of Christ are raised, then he is in best Case to know and understand Christ's loving Thoughts towards him. Why, even as a Fountain may be known by the Streams, so it is here; our Knowledge, Faith, Love and Esteem of Christ, are but Streams that flow from Christ's kind Heart towards us: *We love him, because he first loved us: we think of him, because he first thinks of us.* And therefore, by what we think of Christ we may know what he thinks of us: If you think honourably of him, you may thence know he thinks favourably of you.

you; if you think much of him, you may know he thinks much of you. O, may a Believer say, I have Reason to think much Good of him, for he is *fairer than the Sons of Men*, the spotless Lamb of God; but he hath Reason to think much Ill of me, for I am all black and deformed like Hell and the Devil. But I'll tell you, Believer, that all his Thoughts of you make you to be in him, what he thinks you to be in him, however deformed you are in your selves, and see your selves to be; yet, I say, as his Thoughts make Things to be (for he but thought there should be a World, and there was a World; whenever it was his Mind that it should be, then it was, and whatever he thought it to be, that it was, according to his Thought) and as his Thoughts of you make you to be in him, what you are in him: So, if you think him fair and altogether lovely, he is not behind with you, for he thinks you fair too; hence, to the Spouse, that was admiring his Beauty, he says, *Song iv. 7. Thou art all fair, my Love, there is no spot in thee*: And he does not say any Thing, but what he thinks, his Words express his Thoughts; for he cannot lie, who is the Strength of *Israel*. Now, Believer, if you cannot think or believe that you're altogether fair in him, because you see your self altogether foul in yourself; know, that if you saw your self to be all fair in your self, there would be no Need of, or Room for believing that you're all fair in him. Hence he hath left Deformities about you, that there may be Room for Faith; therefore let the Feeling of your Deformity make you humble, but let it not hinder your Faith, which must not stand upon Feeling, but must act contrary to it upon Christ's Word: For, if you ground your Faith upon what you feel in your self, you'll never believe what Christ says anent your being *all fair*, and your being *made the Righteousness of God on him*, *2 Cor. v. last*. If your Faith then can act so as to raise your Thoughts of Christ as altogether lovely, fair and spotless, you have Ground to conclude by that same Act of Faith, that he hath high Thoughts of you, as being all fair and spotless in him,
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whatever Deformity you feel in your self. Christ is infinitely more to you, Believer, than you believe him to be : But, whatever you believe him to be, you may be sure he is that to you, you have all that you see in him ; for Faith's Seeing and Having is all one, even as Believing is explained by Receiving, and Receiving by Believing, *John* i. 12. What you believe then you receive, and what you receive you have, and what you have in him you are in him ; having Beauty, and Riches and Righteousness in him ; you are beautiful, rich and righteous in him ; and consequently, when you believingly think he is all fair and glorious, you may know he thinks you all fair and glorious in him, and he thinks no more of you than what you really are in him. The Question then is put, because you may know, by what you think of Christ, what Christ thinks of you.

10. This Question is put, *What think ye of Christ ?* because we can never think too much of him, who is the God-Man, *David's* Son, and *David's* Lord, being God as well as Man : O what a glorious Object of our Contemplation is here ! You may think too much of your selves and your own Righteousness, but you cannot think too much of Christ and his Righteousness : Yea, when you think any Thing of yourself and your Righteousness, you think too much of it ; but when you think as much as you can of Christ and his Righteousness, you think too little of him. You may think too much of Creatures, but you cannot think too much of Christ. Yea, you may think too much of Angels, as the Apostle *John* did, when he fell down to worship towards the Feet of the Angel, *Rev.* xxii .8. To think of the Nature of Angels, with that inward Reverence and Adoration which we are to have when we think of Christ, would be Idolatry ; and to think of Christ, with the same Frame of Heart as we do of Angels, would be Profaneness : Thus we may think too highly and reverently of Angels ; but we cannot think of Christ too highly, too reverently ; nor can we think too much of him, who is the Lord of Angels, and whom

whom we are to honour even as we honour the Father. These are the Reasons of the Question.

FOURTH HEAD.

The 4th general Head proposed, was, To make Application of the whole. And it may be applied for these following Uses. 1. For *Information*. 2. For *Conviction*. 3. For *Trial*. 4. For *Exhortation* and *Direction*.

1st, It may be applied for *Information*, in these and the like Lessons following. 1. Hence we may learn, Seeing the great Question in the *Christian Catechism* is, *What think ye of Christ?* Then the Sum of Christian Knowledge lies in this one Word, namely, CHRIST. It is not in God absolutely considered, by what he is in himself; but in God relatively considered, by what he is to us, namely, in Christ: Therefore I observe, the Question is not, *What think ye of God?* but, *What think ye of Christ?* For, as God out of Christ stands in no Relation to us Sinners but that of an Enemy, and a consuming Fire; so the Nature, Essence, and Immensity of God, and what he is in himself, is not the great Christian Question; but rather, what he is to us, and so what he is in Christ. All the saving Manifestations of God to his People in Scripture were still, not of God, absolutely and essentially, in what he was in Himself, and in his Nature; but relatively, in what he was to them; and so it was ay in Christ. Thus, when he came to *Abraham*, he said, *I am thy Shield, and thy exceeding great Reward: I am thy God, and the God of thy seed, which seed was Christ,* Gal. iii. 16. in whom that Covenant and Promise was established to *Abraham* and his Offspring: And when God manifested himself to the Patriarchs that came of *Abraham*, *Isaac* and *Jacob*, his ordinary Way was to make himself known upon that Ground of the new Covenant established in Christ, *Abraham's Seed*; hence, when he came to them, he used to say to them, *I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the*
God

God of Jacob; that is, he manifested himself to them, not absolutely, by what he was in his Nature; but relatively, by what he was to them in Christ the promised Seed. If we begin to dive into that Question, *What think ye of God?* we may soon lose our selves, and come to the Philosopher's Demand of a Day to answer that Question, and then a Week, and then a Month, and then till it is impossible to answer it: Nay, we ought not to be curious in searching into the Nature of God, let we get a Dash; for human Philosophy cannot reach it, yea, I doubt if angelical Wisdom can. It is the only pleasant, saving and profitable Enquiry, to study this Question, *What think ye of Christ?* Here we may find what God is to us. To enquire what God is in himself, absolutely and essentially, is no saving or profitable Enquiry. What Profit is it for a Man, who lives under the North-Pole, and sees not the Sun for one Half of the Year, tho' he should count the Course of the Sun all that Time that he sees it not? Or, what Profit were it for a Man to go and count what Rent the King of Morroco or Emperor of China draws every Year, and he gets none of it? As foolish is it for us to begin and study what God is absolutely in himself, and not what he is relatively to us; therefore the Question is not, *What think ye of God?* but, *What think ye of Christ?* And this, by the By, shews the Difference that there is between learned Fools and wise Christians; why, the learned Fool seeks to know and comprehend what God is, what is this Mystery of the Trinity, and the like, and there he mires himself; he seeks to know what God is himself, and not what he is to him: But the poor Christian is herein wiser than that learned Clerk, for all his Wit; for the Christian studies Christ, and so knows what God is to him, better than all the learned *Rabbies* with their curious Speculations: Tho' yet the poor Soul may otherwise be very ignorant and illiterate, yet he is wise unto Salvation, because he knows Christ, and Christ is made of God to him Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification and Redemption; and when he knows

knows Christ, he is upon the surest and safest Way to know God ; for he sees God in Christ, and God related to him in Christ, for Christ is our Relation as God-Man-Mediator. And indeed, Sirs, to believe in Christ, is to believe God's Relation to us, and God reconciled to us: For when we look to Christ, we see God in him ; and when we see God in him, we see that he is reconciled in him to us, and well pleased in him with us, *2 Cor. v. 19. God is in Christ reconciling the World to himself.* Mat. iii. last. *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.* I own indeed, a Man may be a Believer, and yet apprehend God to be his Enemy ; but then he is not believing, he is not thinking of Christ by Faith: It is an unbelieving Thought he hath then of God ; for a believing Thought of Christ, would give him another Thought of God, even as a Friend and Father in him. This then, I hope, is an useful Inference, That the Sum of Christian Knowledge is Christ.

2dly, Hence see what is the best Matter for Meditation, and the best Rule for Self-examination. Here is the most noble Subject of Meditation, namely, to think of Christ ; and here is the most excellent Rule for Examination, namely, to ask our Souls that Question, *What think we of Christ ?* Meditation and Self-examination are Duties much neglected among us ; they are spiritual Exercises, directly cross and opposite to our vain, wandring, idle and unfixed Hearts. A Man will rather go betwixt the Stilts of a Plough from Morning to Evening, than travel betwixt these two Duties for one Half-Hour, tho' yet they are like the Stilts of that Plough by which the Fallow-ground of the Heart must be plowed up ; but when the Thoughts begin to come in betwixt these two Stilts of Meditation and Self-examination, behold on a sudden (to speak it in broad Scots) they *quit the Plough, and run away with the Harrows.* No doubt you will know this from sad Experience, that your Thoughts are in this Matter like wild vitious Horses, running mad here and there through the Fields, without keeping any
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Road

Road, or observing any Rule ; but here is the best Matter and Rule, both for regulating our Thoughts in Meditation and Self-examination. As for Meditation, the best Way is to think of Christ : Why, you may think upon a Promise, but out of Christ you'll find no Comfort in it, for all the Promises are *Yea* and *Amen* in him ; and so you will not find it your own, but by looking to Christ. Yea, you may think upon God, but out of Christ you'll find no Comfort in him, *Psal. lxxvii. 3. I remembred God, and was troubled :* But the Antidote against that Trouble is believing Thoughts of Christ ; therefore says Christ to his Disciples, *John xiv. 1. Let not your Hearts be troubled ; ye believe in God, believe also in me.* If you think upon the Law, you'll find there you're drown'd in Debt both to the Command and Curse, till once ye look to Christ the End of the Law for Righteousness. If you think upon your Duties that God calls you to, you'll find them a heavy Task, till once you look to Christ, and then you'll find his Yoke is easy, and his Commands are not grievous, Again, as to Self-examination, the best Rule here is to say to your Souls, *What think ye of Christ ?* They are but proud self-conceited Persons that do not think highly of Christ, and God approves them not, *2 Cor. x. last. He that glories,* says the Apostle, *let him glory in the Lord :* For not he that commends himself is approved, but whom the Lord commends ; intimating, that they that glory only in the Lord, they discommend themselves, and are commended and approved of God, but they that do not glory in the Lord, nor think highly of him, they commend themselves, but are discommended and disapproved of God ; yea, they deceive themselves, *Gal. vi. 3. If any Man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself.* Self-conceit is Self-deceit ; and as they are Self-deceivers who are Self-exalters, so they are all Self-exalters who are Christ-despisers ; they think not much of Christ, who think much of themselves : And so, to enquire what you think of Christ,

Christ, is the best Way to find yourself out, what you are in State or Frame. You may by this Rule know how to judge of your own Thoughts: You may think of a thousand good Things, you may think of Sermons, you may think of Death, Judgment and Eternity; but tho' you may think seriously on these Subjects, yet the Rule whereby to judge of the Rectitude of your Thoughts about them is here, Do they lead you to high Thoughts of Christ, in whom alone we can think of Death without Horror, Judgment without Terror, and Eternity without Fear or Dread?

3dly, Hence we may see, that Christ himself is the best Judge of Mens State; for he can look in to the Heart and Thoughts of Men, and say, *What think ye of Christ?* All Judgment is committed to the Son of God, and he will cast many whom the World approves, because, whatever Men think of them, yet he knows that they think little of him and his Father. Also, he will approve of some whom the World casts; because, however the World thinks little of them, yet he knows that they think much of him and his Father; for they know him, and whose Son he is. Christ's Question shews that he knows our Thoughts; for, to whom shall we give an Account of our Answer to this Question? None in all the World knows what we think but God himself, and Christ is God. Christ discovers the Ignorance of the *Pharisees* here also, and shews that he knew their Thoughts were amiss: *If he be David's Son*, says he, *how does David in Spirit call him Lord?* Here they were confounded, and might have been convicted that their Thoughts were Naught. Indeed, this was one of these Things that old *Simeon* declared concerning Christ, that *He should be a sign that should be spoken against, that the Thoughts of many Hearts might be revealed*, Luke ii. 35. Thus, when Christ met with the Woman of *Samaria*, he revealed many Thoughts of her Heart to her, and gave her a View of all her lewd Tricks. *Come and see a Man*, says she, *that told me all Things that ever I did; is not this the Christ?* As Satan presented to our Lord Jesus the whole

Body of the World at a Glance, so Christ can let us see a black Sight of all our Sins at once, so as to force us to acknowledge that he is the Christ, that knows our Hearts and Thoughts. But,

4thly, Hence we may see, what is the great End and Design of a Gospel Ministry, namely, to discover Christ, and remove the Prejudices of Peoples Minds against him, to rectify their Mistakes about him, and to fill them with an high Opinion of him. The Sum of a Gospel Minister's Business, is to commend his Master saying, *What think ye of Christ?* and that both in his preaching and praying, and catechising and visiting. The whole of their Doctrine and Practice is, as it were, a Voice preaching Christ. If they preach the Law, and its Curses and Threatnings against Christless and impenitent Sinners, it is to lead them to Christ, and to drive them to the City of Refuge. If they preach Faith, they make Christ the Author and Finisher, as well as the Object of it. If they preach Repentance, they make Christ, as exalted by the Right Hand of God *to be a Prince and Saviour to give Repentance*, the Fountain of it; and Christ crucified, viewed by Faith, to be the immediate Root of it. If they preach Duties and New Obedience, they make CHRIST the *Alpha* and *Omega* of it. Ministers may indeed speak much of Christ in their Sermons, and yet not preach Christ: As for Example, If One should preach Christ mainly as a Lawgiver, to be obeyed, and little or nothing of Christ as a Lawfullfiller, to be believed in, and served from Love because of his having saved us from the Yoke of the Law; For, a Covenant of Life and Death, upon Doing or not Doing, may be preached, and called the Gospel of Christ, in a Mistake, while it is only the Law that is preached, and not *Christ the End of the Law for Righteousness*: And you may know it by this among other Things, the Tendency of such Old Covenant-Doctrine, is to lead Men to this Question, not, *What think ye of Christ?* but, *What think ye of yourselves?* and, *What are you doing, that you may have*

have eternal Life? Why, the Man begins to think, God is standing upon some doing Terms yet with him; and therefore, in order to Life, he must do so and so: Thus he is led to himself, and not to Christ. But Gospel-doctrine tends to lead a Man wholly out of himself, and wholly in to Christ; for whatever be the Text, the Strain of Gospel-doctrine is, *What thinkye of Christ?* It is not the Design of Gospel-ministers to commend themselves, but Christ. There is a Sett of Ministers, say some, that set up themselves above Others, and study only to commend themselves, to the Disparagement of all Others, as if none but they were Gospel-ministers; but my Friends, if any Man's Concern for Christ's Cause and Interest, or for his Master's Glory, shall commend him, he needs not think strange tho' the World of *Pharisees* envy him, as they did Christ himself when his Doctrine and Life commended him. I'll tell you what Commendation a Gospel-minister hunts most after; it is that of *Paul*, 2 *Cor.* iii. 1, 2, 3. it is to have an Epistle-commendatory in the Hearts of Hearers, by the Power of the Spirit of God savingly accompanying the Word, and leaving an Impression there, that it is indeed the Word of God, and not of Man, and that God is in it of a Truth; he would desire, with the same Apostle. 2 *Cor.* iv. 2. to commend himself by the Manifestation of the Truth to every Man's Conscience in the Sight of God. Let Truth be nick-named and reproached as it will the Evidence of Truth will commend it self to the Consciences of all the Lovers thereof. Mean Time, it is possible that a Man may commend Christ, in order to commend himself as an evangelical-Preacher; for such a good Work he is indeed commendable, but for such a bad End it is to God only that he is accountable: But it is possible also to know if a Man intend not himself by preaching Christ; for sometimes there is such a Power and Virtue attending the Word, and such a Smell and Savour of Heaven with the Preacher, as carries a secret Demonstration of his Spirituality and Purity of Intention into the Heart even

of the carnall By-standers, let be these whom he hath enlightned with the Spirit of Discerning, to know the Voice of *Christ* from a *Stranger*. However, Sirs, think of Ministers what ye will, the great Question is, *What think ye of Christ?* Wo to us, if our only Design be to bring People to say, *What think ye of such a Minister, and what think ye of such a Sermon?* if we make *Christ* a Covert for raising our own Applause, he can instantly command an Angel to smite us, as he did *Herod*, and order us to be eaten up of Worms, for not giving God the Glory. O what should ye think of us? Tho' we magnify our Office as Ambassadors of *Christ*, yet in our selves some of us, are as frail, feeble, sinful Pieces of Dust as any of you; we are among the chief of Sinners, as well as you; we need the Blood and Spirit of *Christ* to justify and sanctify us, as well as you; let us decrease, but let *Christ* increase: If any of us be made Instruments of Good to your Souls, let it engage you to think the more of *Christ*, that could work such a Work by such feckless and unlikely Instruments: He puts the Treasure in earthen Vessels, that the *Excellency of the Power may be of God*, and not of us. Whatever Honour God calls you to put upon them for their Work's Sake, yet if our Esteem centre upon the Minister or his Work, saying, *O I think much of yonder Minister, and I think much of yonder Sermon*, you need to begin to think better; for the grand Question is, *What think ye of Christ?* It is indeed the best Sermon that works the highest Thoughts of *Christ*.

The 2d Use is for Conviction and Reproof to all these that are filled with unworthy and unbecoming Thoughts of *Christ*, with ignorant and erroneous Thoughts of him: Some have no Thoughts of *Christ* at all; some that think of him, yet think nothing of him; some think little of him; some think hardly and harshly of him; some think meanly and basely of him: To speak of all the base and mean Thoughts of *Christ* that the World is filled with, would be impossible. O how basely do the *Arians* think

think of Christ, and his supreme Godhead! If I had not found it necessary to confine my self to the first Branch of Christ's Question here, *What think ye of Christ?* The other Branch, namely, *Whose Son is he?* might have led me particularly to have treated the Doctrine of Christ's Sonship, and eternal Godhead, and Co-equality with the Father, in Opposition to that damnable Heresy, which some tell us is creeping in to *Scotland*, as well as it is raging in *England* and *Ireland*: I shall only say, that the Question concerns them as well as the *Pharisees* of old, *What think ye of Christ, and whose Son is he?* O, can they say no more than, with the *Pharisees*, that he is the Son of *David*? Then, how does *David* in Spirit call him Lord? And if he be *David's* Lord and God, how can he be so, and yet not co-equal with the Father? For we have not two Lords, or Two God's; the Lord our God is One Lord, we have but One supreme God and Lord; therefore Christ, being Lord, must be One with the Father essentially: Christ is the true God, and eternal Life. But I cannot now enlarge on this subject. O may *Arian* Doctors begin to read over the Christian Catechism again, and learn to answer this Question, *What think ye of Christ?* Again, as *Arians* think nothing of his Godhead, but as if it were an inferior Deity; so some that pretend a greater Respect to him, yet think but basely of him: *Papists* think nothing of the Imputation of his Righteousness; *Socinians* think nothing of the Sacrifice of his Death; *Arminians* think nothing of the Power of his Grace; *Quakers* think nothing of his Word; *Atheists* think nothing of his Spirit; *Deists* think nothing of his Revelations. If we look out to the World, the *Pagans* have no Thought of him at all: The *Mahometans* think him nothing but a great Prophet at best, and inferior to *Mahomet*: The *Jews*, think him nothing but an Impostor, and that he is not the Christ, but only the Carpenter's Son: or, it may be, a Blasphemer, that had a Devil. And again, if we look in to the Church even the purest Churches in this World, among which I would

would fain hope the poor Church of Scotland hath not yet lost the Vogue ; Yet, O how many dark and confused Notions, yea, unwarrantable and unworthy Thoughts of Christ may be there discovered, even among these Churches that are supposed to be pure, Christian, Protestant and reformed Churches ! It were endless, to speak of doctrinal and practical Errors that swarm in the Churches, whereby Contempt is poured upon Christ and his Doctrine, his Truth, his Gospel, and his Yoke, his loving Yoke of Gospel obedience. What low Thoughts of Christ appear in that Strain of Doctrine, that tends to confound the old and new-Covenant, Law and Gospel, Faith and Works, without ridding Marches duly betwixt Christ, and all his Rivals and Competitors, that seek to share with him in the Glory of Salvation-work ! What low Thoughts of Christ appear in that Sort of Practice, that consists either in a Life of legal Righteousness, or a Life of open Wickedness ! What low Thoughts of Christ, as our Righteousness, appear from every Thing that tends to lead Sinners back to the Law, as a Covenant of Works ! And what low Thoughts of Christ, as our Sanctification, appear from every Thing that tends to lead Sinners off from the Law, as a Rule of Holiness ! How is Christ, and his Merit and Righteousness disesteemed, to the Encouragement of Self and Self righteousness ! And how is Christ, and his Spirit and Grace disesteemed, to the Encouragement of Sin and Licentiousness ! It is not my Business to expose the Nakedness of any : They are singular Persons, that are helped to guard against all Right and Left-hand Extremes, so as to think no less of Christ as a Lord, than Christ as a Saviour ; and to esteem a whole Christ, without setting up one Part of Christ against another ; but my Work especially is, to strike at the Root of all that Disesteem of Christ, that takes Place in the World, especially in the Visible Church. Whence is it, that the World thinks so little of Christ, and so naughtily of him ? Why, 1st, Ignorance is a Cause of it, *Ignorantia Cupido* ; As it is impossible for them to undervalue

lue Christ, who have the saving Knowledge of him ;
 so it is not possible that any can prize him, whom they
 do not know. Many are like *Festus*, Acts xxv. 19.
 who told *Agrippa*, That *Paul's* Enemies had Questions
 against him, concerning One JESUS ; Christ is to
 them a certain Man, One *Jesus*, but for their Part
 they know little of him, and are indifferent about him :
 As a blind Man, what he does not see, he cares not
 for, tho' he be told of it as never so fair and beautiful ;
 so natural Men are blind, 2 Cor. iv. 4. they can see no
 Beauty or Comeliness in Christ, for which they should
 desire him. Therefore, tho' they may hear of his
 Glory and Comeliness, and be a little mov'd therewith,
 yet they care not so much for him, as to give him the
 highest Room in their Thoughts and Esteem. 2dly,
Unbelief is another Cause why People think little of
 Christ ; if they could believe, they would see the
 Glory of God in him, and see him a glorious and love-
 ly Object : But, through Unbelief, Christ is lothsom
 instead of lovely ; hence his Doctrine is lothsom, his
 Righteousness, his Holiness, his Cross : Unbelief makes
 People think Christ is a Cheat, and God is a Liar,
 and that he says what he hath no Mind to do ; it
 makes them think that he is not able to save, or that
 he is not willing to save. O how basely does Unbelief
 think of Christ ! Unbelief also will make a Man think
 God like unto himself, and an Approver of his Sin,
Psal. 1. at the Close, Thou thoughtest that I was alto-
gether such an One as thy self ; and so it makes them
 think of Christ but very basely. 3dly, *Pride and Self-*
righteousness is another Cause why People think little
 of Christ, Rom. x. 3. While People think much of
 themselves, and their Doing, they cannot think much
 of Christ, and his Righteousness. This is that legal
 Principle that makes Men to do with the Garment of
 Christ's Righteousness, as the *Ammonites* did with
 the Garments of *David's* Messengers, they clipt them
 so short, that they were not able to hide their Shame :
 But if it was a Terror and Smiting to *David's* Heart,
 to cut off but a little of the Lap of *Saul's* Garment,

ought it not to be a Terror to us, to cut off a Lap of Christ's Garment, or to clip it so short, as to think that it cannot cover us completely, without some Rags of our own rotten Righteousness sewed to it? Again, it is this legal Principle that makes Believers themselves think it cannot be that they are accepted as righteous, perfectly righteous in the Sight of God, through the Righteousness of Christ imputed; why, because they want a Feeling of that Righteousness in themselves, which the legal Heart is ready to make the Foundation of Pardon and Acceptance: But, as *Luther* said, We must not feel, but believe, that we are thus righteous; yea, it is this hidden Principle of Self-righteousness, that will make a Minister preach Christ alone for Righteousness, as if he were as much for exalting Christ, as any that ever preached; and yet, before ever you know well where you are, you'll find him bringing in some legal Duty or Qualification, in order to your being justified, that will spoil all; just like an untoward Milk-cow, that will let down a good deal of Milk very well, but then, with an unhappy Kick of her Foot, she will tumble it all down to the Ground, when she hath done; Even so the sincere Milk of the Word of Life, and Justification through Christ's Righteousness alone, may be let down abundantly, that you would think the Man as evangelical as *Paul* himself, or any Body that ever preached the Gospel: But, behold, of a sudden, the legal Foot gives it a Kick, and spills all when he hath done, or else the Law sets her Foot among the Midst of the Milk; I mean, mixes some dirty Righteousness, and Qualification of our own, with the fair and clean Milk of Christ's Righteousness, so as the poor exercised Soul scanners to take a Drink of it. Why, I thought yonder Milk was for me, and yonder Righteousness of Christ was for me; but there came in a Qualification, that, before ever I could be justified, I behoved to do so and so, and to be so and so humbled, and penitent; and sure I am, I want such a Qualification, and therefore all is lost to me.

But

But, poor Soul, whatever come in this Way, tending to make you look into your self, and stand off from Christ, you may know it is but a Switch of the Law of Works ; slight it, and set it off, if it hinder you from thinking of Christ as your ALL, and from buying and drinking his Wine and Milk without Money and without Price. 4thly, *Carnal Reason* is another Cause, why People think little of Christ ; for the natural Man receives not the Things of the Spirit of God, they are Foolishness to him. 1 Cor. ii. 14. There is natural Reason, which is so much c^ord up at this Day, when Man goes about to measure God's Truths, and spiritual Mysteries, with this short Line of humane Reason ; and finding, that Reason agrees with these Mysteries, no more than the Sound of Ram-Horns, in the View of carnal Sense, was like to bring down the Walls of *Jericho* ; Behold, no Fault must be found with *Lady Reason*, but Christ's Gospel, and the Mysteries thereof, must bear the Blame, namely, That they are foolish and absurd ; and therefore not to be received or esteemed by such wise Heads as they are, who little remember the Apostle's Admonition, 1 Cor. iii. 18. *If any Man will be wise, let him become a Fool, that he may be wise.* Hence *Luther* gave it as an infallible Mark that the Gospel was not truly preached, and was not the Gospel indeed, namely, If it was so brewed, fitted, and adapted unto Reason, that all approved of it, and yielded to it peaceably ; for how then should Christ be a Sign that should be spoken against, *Luke ii. 34.* and a Stone of Stumbling, and Rock of Offence ? This leads me to a 5th Cause why People think so little of Christ, namely, The *Calumny* cast upon the Gospel of Christ, and the Dispensers of it. Is it possible for the Wisdom of the World to hold her Peace from speaking against that which she judges to be Foolishness ? How then shall Christ be not only for the Rising, but the Falling of many in *Israel* ? Mark, says *Luther*, where this Fall is, even in *Israel*, in that People that seemed to be Christ's only People, and upon Christ's Side.

It is even in *Israel* that many fall, and in *Israel* that Christ is spoken against. Thus, when he came to be a Minister of the old and ancient Truths of God, to confirm the Promises made unto the Fathers, *Rom. xv. 8.* when he began to preach the same, the greatest Part of the Multitude cried out, *What new Doctrine is this?* *Mark i. 27.* Whence we may see, that when a Church hath gone off from any ancient Truth, or old Way of expressing it, no sooner are these old Truths revived, or set in their ancient Frame, than presently it is called a new Scheme of Doctrine: However, by this Means, Satan gets much of his Will; for it tends to make People think little of Christ, and his Gospel. 6thly, *Division* is another Cause, why People think so little of Christ. There is a two-fold *Division* that I mean; there is not only an outward Church-division, but an inward Heart-division. No Doubt the former hath a great Hand in making many to slight Christ; for, when a Church is divided, the Generality of People are apt to be stumbled: Why, say they, we know not whom to believe, and what Side to turn to; every Party says they are for Christ, and therefore the indifferent Sort of People think we will even let Christ and them both alone. But it is especially inward *Heart-division* that I mean: When the Heart is divided betwixt Christ and the World, betwixt Christ and Idols or Lusts: The World, and Lusts thereof, will be sure to carry away the Heart, that it cannot think highly of Christ, while it thinks so much of other Things. A Man may as soon, with one Eye, observe the Stars, and with the other, measure the Earth at the same Time, as he can think highly of Christ, and of his Idols too: Therefore, when Satan, like the pretended Mother, says, Let it be neither thine nor mine, but divide it; God, who is the Lord of the Heart, says, Let the Devil rather have all; for God will either have all, or none. Now, when Men have any approved Idol in the Heart, Christ is despised, his Rival gets all; the divided Heart, then is a Heart separate, and joined to Idols; and this Division

sion causes Disesteem of Christ, so as the Man cannot think of Christ, he must, of Necessity, think of some other Thing, *Luke xiv. 18.* See how they that were invited to the great Supper, the Gospel-banquet, put it off with Excuses, *I have bought a Piece of Ground, and I must needs go and see it,* says one: Mark the Phrase, *I must need go*; he pleads Necessity, and Necessity hath no Law. When the Heart is not wholly for Christ, of Necessity it will be for the World, and the Lusts thereof: And he that is not for Christ, Satan will find him ay enough of Business to take up his Thoughts, and which the Man will reckon so necessary, that he will have no Leisure to think of Christ. Now, when this Question is proposed, *What think of Christ?* or when Christ is offered, there are two Sorts of Persons that shew very little Esteem of him; yea, that shew they do nothing but despise him in their Heart: The Apostle compares them to Dogs and Swine, *2 Pet. ii, 22.* 1. There are some like Swine, namely, The profane worldly People; for as Swine think more of the Mire, than any Thing else, so, if one go to drive him away from the Mire, he only gives a Grunt, and away he goes to the Mire again, or else rooting his Snout in the Earth: So profane and worldly People love to wallow in the Mire of Sin, and to be rooting and rotting in the Earth; and if any go about to drive them from Sin, and to pull their Noses out of the Earth, they go away grunting and grumbling in their Heart, that they cannot be allowed their necessary Pleasure and Profit; and they return to the Wallowing in the Mire, and rooting in the Earth, as eagerly as ever. All the Answer they give to the Question, *What think ye of Christ?* is a Grunt; they are disturbed a little about it, and moved a little to mutter some Words, according, as they are affected; but away they go grunting, with their Mouth towards the Dust; it is not Christ they are thinking of. 2. There are others like Dogs, namely, *Legalists*, and *Self-justiciaries*, that are worse Enemies to the Gospel of Christ, than the World-

Worldling, or openly Profane; for as a Dog thinks more of a stinking Carcase than any Thing else, so, if you go about to drive the Dog from his Vomit or stinking Carrion, he will be ready either to bark or bite, or flee in your Face: Even so Legalists and Self-justiciars think more of the stinking Carcase of their own Righteousness, and legal Duties, than any Thing else: And when any goes about to draw them away from the high Esteem of the filthy Rags of their own Righteousness, shewing the Lothsomness and Vileness thereof, the absolute Necessity of being wholly denied thereto, and adorned with nothing but Christ's perfect Righteousness for Justification before God; if we show them how God justifies the Ungodly, and how the Righteousness of God, without the Works of the Law, is manifested in the Gospel; why, then they go away from the Ordinances, barking and biting, and slandering, calumniating the Gospel, which they do not understand or esteem, as if it were a Doctrine of Licentiousness, and an Encouragement of Sin; and they return to their Vomit, their stinking Carrion, neglecting the heavenly Carcase, to which the believing Eagles gather together, that they may live by Faith upon the Son of God. Now, both these Sorts of Persons, however differently affected, yet agree in their slighting of Christ, upon different Grounds. What do they think of Christ? Nothing at all: The Lord convince and awaken such.

The *Third Use* may be for *Examination* and *Trial*. Let this great Question of the Christian Catechism be a Touchstone, to try what Mettal you are of, and to understand what is your State now, and what will be your Lot for ever: It is, and will be, according as you answer this Question, *What think ye of Christ?* For helping you into this Enquiry, I would direct you to try it. 1. By the Quality of your Thoughts. 2. By the Object thereof.

First, Try your selves upon this Question, by the Quality of your Thoughts; for it is not a simple Thought, like a flying Vapour, that is here intended, but

but a qualified Thought, that you are to try your selves by; for Example, (1.) Right and becoming Thoughts of Christ are preferring and superlative Thoughts, Christ is beyond Comparison to the Man: The Language of such a Thought of Christ is this, O what can he be compared unto! If you compare him to a Rose, he is the Rose of *Sharon*: If you compare him to a Lillie, he is *the Lillie of the Valley*: If you compare him to a Sun, he is the Sun of Righteousness: If you compare him to a Star, he is the bright and Morning-Star: If you compare him to a Chief and honourable Worthy, he is the Chief among Ten thousands: If you compare him to a Head, he is the Head of Principalities and Powers: If you compare him to a Flower, he is the Flower of the Stem of *Jesse*: If you compare him to a Branch, he is the Branch of Righteousness: If you compare him to an Advocate, he is an Advocate with the Father: If you compare him to a Counsellor, he is the wondrous Counsellor: If you compare him to a King, he is the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords: If you compare him to a Prince, he is the Prince of Peace, the Prince of the Kings of the Earth: If you compare him with Men, he is fairer than the Sons of Men: If you compare him with Angels, he is the Lord of Angels; let all the Angels of God worship him. The Man does in his Thoughts prefer Christ to all Things in Heaven and Earth, *Whom have I in Heaven but Thee? and there is none upon the Earth that I desire besides Thee*; in all Things he gives him the Pre-eminence, *Col. i. 18.* Then again, (2.) Right and becoming Thoughts of Christ are admiring and adoring Thoughts, exalting and extolling Thoughts; if you have due Thoughts of him in your Heart, you'll find in your Heart to bless him, saying, as *Psal. cxviii. 26. Blessed is he, in God's great Name, that cometh us to save: We, from the House which to the Lord pertains, you blessed have.* And, O magnify the Lord with me; you would wish that all the World would fall a blessing, and praising, and extolling him: They are glorying and glorifying Thoughts;

Thoughts; the Man's Heart glories in the Lord, and glorifies the Lord, and would desire his Glory may be advanced above the Heavens: Why, because, (3.) Right and becoming Thoughts of Christ are spiritual and sublimating Thoughts; natural Thoughts can rise no higher than Nature, 1 Cor. ii. 14. but spiritual Thoughts being managed by the Conduct and Influence of the Spirit of God; the Spirit searches all Things, even the deep Things of God. Indeed the Spirit of God is the *All in all* of these Thoughts; for he comes, according to the Promise, and glorifies Christ, by receiving the Things of Christ, and shewing them unto the Soul, *John* xvi. 14. *They that are after the Flesh, do mind the Things of the Flesh; but they that are after the Spirit, the Things of the Spirit*, Rom. viii. 5. Indeed, the Things of Christ and the Things of the Spirit are the same, no human natural Wisdom can reach to them; wise Naturalists may indeed dream of them, and speak of them like a Man speaking in his Dream of the Light of the Sun, while yet it is dark Night with him, and he was never awakned, &c. (4.) Right and becoming Thoughts of Christ are applying and appropriating Thoughts, infomuch that the Man takes Christ into his Soul; as he takes Meat and Drink into his Body, *John* vi. 54. This is that believing Thought, without which a Man receives no Benefit, any more than a Man that wants Meat can have Benefit by thinking upon Meat without eating thereof. The Man takes in Christ to himself for his own Good. To think of Christ, without applying him, is like a Man thinking of Meat and Drink, without taking it, which does no Good. *Quest.* But can there be no right Thinking of Christ, without applying? Indeed, Man, the Thought is but a vain Thought, an unbelieving Thought, an unprofitable Thought, if it be not either an applying Thought of Christ, or a Thought of Christ in order to Application; like a sick Man receiving a Cordial out of his Physician's Hand, he takes it from him, not

to hold it in his Hand and no more, but in order to make it his own, by drinking it down for his Refreshment, Healing, and Strengthening. The Man's Taking the Cordial in his Hand, is not properly the Taking that the Physician means, but his taking it in to himself, or down into his Stomach, is the proper taking of it; yet the former taking of it in his Hand is right, in so far as it is in order to the other; so here, a bare Thinking of Christ is of no Avail, unless it be an applying Thought, or a Thought in order to Application: And tho' the Thoughts of Christ in order to Application be not Application it self properly, yet it is good, in so far as it is a taking Christ into your Hand, in order to take him into your Heart, and that for your own Soul's Refreshment, Life, Health, and everlasting Salvation. (5.) Right Thoughts of Christ are sinking and serious Thoughts, in Opposition to swimming, roving, and indifferent Thoughts. Some have a wild Thought about Christ, that if he be good for any Thing, they shall have a Share of him, as well as others: But what he is, and how they shall come by him, they never deeply pondered; for they were never touched with a Sense of their Sin, Misery and undone State without him. A swimming Thought of Christ is like that of some ignorant Creatures crying out in a Surprise, *Christ have Mercy on us*; but the Thought that sinks deep is like that of the Publican smitting on his Breast, and crying, *Lord have Mercy on me a Sinner*. But there are learned Fools in the World, as well as ignorant ones, that have nothing but swimming Thoughts, roving Speculations; and yet, it may be, they can speak of Christ to better Purpose (you would think) than One that is exercised to Godliness: But yet these two Sorts differ as far as the Pleading of an Orator differs from the Pleading of a Malefactor; the One vents his great Wit, but the other his Heart-concern. Again, (6.) Right Thoughts of Christ are trading Thoughts; the Man hath it for his constant Trade, to think highly of Christ, and give him the chief Room in his Heart and Esteem.

in this Respect, his Heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord. *The Desire of our Soul is to thy Name*, says the Church, *Isa. xxvi. 8, 9. and to the Remembrance of thee. With my Soul have I desired thee in the Night, and with my Spirit within me will I seek thee early*: There was a trading with Heaven late at Night, and early in the Morning. Yea, *David* makes it Morning, and Evening, and Mid-time of the Day; yea more, seven Times a Day; and yet most of all, when he says, *My Souls breaks for the Longing that it hath to thy righteous Judgments at all Times*. It is a constant Trading. True indeed, there are innumerable Intermissions in the Believer's Christian Thoughts and Desires: But as we say, It is such a Man's Trade to buy and sell, while he follows that Employment, tho' it is not every Moment he is thus occupied; but tho' there be several Intermissions in the Exercise of his Employment, yet the Bent of his Mind goes that Way: So here, we may call this the Believer's constant Trade; because, whatever Intermissions there are in this his mental trading with Heaven, yet the Bent of his Soul is towards Christ: Yea, it is not only his Business, but his Pleasure; and that makes him go on. If a Man thrive at his Trade, he takes Pleasure in it; and if not, he is in Danger of giving it over. We go sometimes upon Business to these whom we never saw, nor care for seeing again, and whom we take little Pleasure to converse with: They that never go to Christ but merely upon Business, and never find any Pleasure in conversing with him, surely they are too great Strangers to him: Certainly, Believer, there is too much Strangeness betwixt Christ and you, if your Business you have ado with Christ be seldom your Pleasure, or if it be merely Business that takes you to him, saying, I want a Pardon, I want a Promise, I want this and that. But, is there never a Love-visit you make to him, saying, Lord, I have got a Pardon, and I am come to bless thee for it; I have got a Promise, and I am come to praise thee for it; Thy Company is sweet, and I am come to get thee in my Arms, that I may

may have more of thy Embraces? O sweet Trading! My Meditation of him shall be sweet. Indeed, these Thoughts of Christ that are right, are glad, joyful, satisfying Thoughts. (7.) Right Thoughts of Christ are humbling Thoughts, and yet embolding Thoughts. O but these that think highly of Christ, cannot but think meanly of themselves, saying with *Job*, *Now mine Eye seeth thee; wherefore, I abhor my self, and repent in Dust and Ashes.* The Believer, that thinks duly of Christ hath both the highest and lowest Thoughts in the World, the highest Thoughts of Christ, and the lowest Thoughts of himself; and yet this Humility doth not hinder his Boldness, for he hath *Boldness to enter into the Holiest by the Blood of Jesus*, Heb. x. 19. The more he thinks of Christ, the more humble Thoughts he has of himself; and yet, the more he thinks of Christ, the more bold he is towards God. It is a bold Humility; and a humble Boldness; hence, when he is *worshipping God in the Spirit*, two other Things concur, *Phil.* iii. 3. namely, a *Rejoicing in Christ Jesus*, and a *Having no Confidence in the Flesh*. O, says the Soul, I have no Ground of Confidence in my self, but I have all Ground of Confidence in Christ! Unworthy Wretch am I, as ever was out of Hell; but behold, there is the worthy Blood, the worthy Righteousness of Christ, *the Lord our Righteousness*; therefore, unworthy as I am, I'm warranted to be bold in claiming all thro' Christ. I see the Holy of Holies is open to me thro' this Blood of Christ. (8.) Right Thoughts of Christ are *assimulating* Thoughts, sanctifying and transforming Thoughts. *2 Cor.* iii. *last.* They that see Christ, cannot but love him, and desire to be like him; for there is a smiting Favour in his Face. They that are in Heaven are like him, because they see him as he is; the beatifical Vision brings in full Conformity to him: Now, a spiritual Thought and a believing Thought is a mental Sight, a fiducial Vision of him; and the more of this, the more Conformity to him in Holiness. The Thought that indears Christ, embitters Sin; a Man

cannot think duly of the Loveliness of Christ, without thinking of the Loathsomeness of Sin. O, when the Sun of Righteousness ariseth, there is a Heat that accompanies the Light, and warms the Heart: And indeed high Thoughts of Christ do warm the Heart, and make it burn within him; and such Heart warming Thoughts tend to burn up and destroy Corruption; for, as Christ comes in to the Heart, Sin must go out, according to the Measure and Degree of his Coming: As a Talent of Gold, or some weighty Metal, falling into a Vessel of Water, dashes out all that is in the Vessel, to make Room for it self; so Christ coming in to the Heart, dashes out Sin to make Room for himself. And indeed they that have honourable Thoughts of Christ in their Hearts, cannot have favourable Thoughts of Sin; because, whenever Christ comes into the Thoughts, if he do not dash out the Life, yet he dashes out the Love of Sin. What, Man! will you say that Christ is in you, and that you have Faith, and yet the Love of Sin as great as ever, and you can indulge your self in Whoredom, and Drunkenness, and Lying, and Swearing? &c. You'll never make a good Man believe that Christ is in you, or that you have Faith, even tho' you should swear by your Faith, as some do, who even thereby testify to the World, that they have no Faith at all, being so prodigal of it, as to swear away the Faith which they say or think they have. So far as Christ comes in, Sin goes out. It is possible indeed, that a Believer, that hath Christ in him, may think that he hath more Sin than ever, and that Sin is on the growing Hand, instead of the decaying; but he is mistaken: It is in this Case as it is with a Cup of Water, put Silver and Gold into the Cup, and the Water swells up; and the more you put in, the more will the Water swell and run over, that you would think there is still more Water than before, the more Gold is put in: Christ is the tried Gold; and the more the Vessel of the Believer's Heart is filled with it, the more may Sin appear to rise and swell,
and

and run over all its Banks: This frightens and terrifies the poor Soul, because now he sees that which, it may be, was hid in the Vessel of his Heart before, and out of his Sight. But it is not that there is more Sin, more Water than before, but more Gold cast in; only every Dash perhaps makes the Water fly about, that he thinks he was never so full of Sin and Corruption as now: Yet still it holds good, Christ's coming in makes Sin flee out; and the more it seems to rise and swell, the more does the Soul's Indignation rise and swell against it. All right Thoughts of Christ are sanctifying Thoughts. (9.) High Thoughts of Christ are new Thoughts: They that suppose they have thought well enough of Christ all their Days, and have no better Thoughts, no higher Thoughts, no weightier Thoughts, no clearer Thoughts of him than ever they had, surely they are Strangers to this Esteem of Christ that we are enquiring into. *If any Man be in Christ, he is a new Creature; old Things are done away, and all Things are become new, and new Thoughts among the rest.* Where Grace comes, there the wicked Man does forsake his Way, and the unrighteous Man his Thoughts, his carnal Thoughts, his legal Thoughts; they are changed into spiritual Thoughts, evangelical Thoughts, such as he never had before: And, (10.) New Thoughts of Christ will bring in new Words and new Actions; the Words follow the Thoughts. You may then turn the Question, *What think ye of Christ?* to another, *What speak ye of him?* for out of the Abundance of the Heart, the Mouth speaketh. If you think it ill Breeding, or ungenteel Manners, as many do, to speak of Christ and spiritual Things, and cannot drop a Word for him from Sabbath to Sabbath, who can believe that you think highly of Christ. Nay, that which is most in your Heart and Thoughts, will be most in your Lips. The Actions also follow the Thoughts: Can you think highly of Christ, and yet do nothing for him? Nay, new and precious Thoughts of Christ will bring in new Gospel Obedience from a Principle of Love to him. Thus
you

you may try your selves now on this Question, *What think ye of Christ?* by the Quality of your Thoughts. Examination is the very Design of the Question, namely, to discover what our Thoughts of Christ are; and therefore, I insist mainly upon this.

But, having tried your selves by the Quality of your Thoughts, 2dly, Try yourselves by the Object thereof, namely, Christ; *What think ye of Christ?* And here such a large Field presents itself, that it is impossible I can go through it all. Besides what was said in the doctrinal Part, I would ask some further Questions concerning Christ, not only for Examination, but for raising your Esteem of him. (1.) What think ye of his eminent Station he is in as Mediator betwixt God and you, and his Relation to God and you, his Relation to God by Nature as his eternal Son, and by Office as his righteous Servant? God calls you to wonder at him in this Station, *Isa. xlii. 1. Behold my Servant whom I uphold, &c.* His Father called him forth to serve him and you, and to serve him for your Sake; to serve him as a Redeemer to ransom you; to serve him as a Surety to pay your Debt; to serve him as a Physician to heal your Souls; to serve him in all the Offices that your Need requires: And what think ye of him? (2.) What think ye of his Travels, in order to accomplish the Work that belongs to that Station and Relation wherein he stands to God and you? The Travel of his Eternal Mind before Time, when his Delights were with the Sons of Men; the Travel of his Soul, and the Travel of his Body in Time; his Travel from Heaven to Earth, and from Earth to Heaven again; in all his Mediatorial Actings, his Incarnation, Birth, Life, Death, Resurrection, Ascension and Intercession! O but the Lord can give a Glance of his Glory in the very Naming of these Things! How did he travel as in Birth, when he went about his Father's Business! *Luke ii. 49.* (3.) What think ye of his Treasures, his unsearchable Riches that are stored up in him for the Benefit of poor Sinners, having received these Gifts for Men? All the
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Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge are hid in him; All, and infinitely more than we lost in the first *Adam*, is treasured up in the second *Adam*. O what may a poor, ignorant, witless Sinner think of a Treasure of Wisdom for his Illumination! What may a guilty Sinner think of a Treasure of Righteousness for his Justification! What may a filthy Sinner think of a Treasure of Grace for his Sanctification! And what may a miserable Sinner think of a Treasure of Mercy for his complete Redemption! Yet all these Treasures, and infinitely more than we can name, are in Christ, 1 Cor. i. 30. *Who of God is made unto us Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification and Redemption.* O the Fulness of Grace that is in him, that out of his Fulness we may receive Grace for Grace! He is the Store-house of all God's Treasures; for all is treasured up in him, that we may be compleat in him, who will by Faith make Use of him. And what think ye of him! (4.) What think ye of his Thoughts? *Psal. cxxxix. 17. How precious are thy Thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them: If I count them, says he, they are mo in Number than the sand: when I awake, I am still with thee.* O his Thoughts! Dwell with Wonder and Admiration upon God's Thoughts. Is it nothing to you, that ever he had Thoughts of Love towards the like of you, Thoughts of Pardon, Thoughts of Peace, Thoughts of Good and not of Evil, to give you an expected End! O Believer, his Thoughts are not precious to the rest of the World; but what are they to you? Think you nothing that his Thought and Care should have been about you from all Eternity, and now manifested in Time? Having loved you with an everlasting Love, how is he drawing you with Loving-kindness? besides all his providential Care in bringing Things about for your Good, and that in a Way beyond your Contrivance and Foresight, yea, in such a Manner as never entered into your Thoughts. You little thought what was his Design in ordering your Lot in such a Part of the World, and such a Spot of his Vineyard, and bringing
you

you to such a Sermon, or under such a Ministry. O how innumerable are his precious Thoughts! and what think ye of him? (5.) What think ye of his Words, as well as his Thoughts? Surely, if you think duly, you'll think them sweet Words, *Psal. cxix. 103. How sweet are thy Words to my Taste! Sweeter than Honey to my Mouth.* Does the Spirit never take some of his Words, and put a spiritual Majesty thereupon? Tho' many Times, like *Samuel*, you mistake the Lord's Voice, Believer, and think it is *Eli* that speaks, and cannot discern the Voice of Christ from the Voice of *Moses*, the Voice of Grace from the Voice of the Law; yet when the Spirit comes and rounds in a Word from Christ sometimes, what think ye of it? It is the Voice of my Beloved, behold he cometh skipping upon the Mountains, and leaping upon the Hills! what think ye of his inviting Word, saying, *Come to me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden.* What think ye of his exhorting Words saying, *Why will ye die, O House of Israel?* What think ye of his intreating Words, and his promising Words, his *I wills*, and *ye shalls*, *I will be your God, and ye shall be my People?* Do you think so much of them, that your Hearts say *Amen* to them? What think ye of his *May-bee's*? Believers will think right much of a *May be* from him sometimes. It *may be* he will be gracious; it *may be* ye shall be hid in the Day of the Lord's Anger. What think ye of his *Shall-bee's*? There are *Shall-be's* for the Church in general: Upon all the Glory there *shall be* a Defence; in the Mount of the Lord it *shall be* seen: What think ye of these? There are *Shall-be's* for your self in particular. There is a *Shall-be* for your Protection. *A Man shall be a hiding Place from the Storm.* This Man shall be the Peace, when the Assyrian shall come into our Land. There is a *Shall-be* for your Provision, Bread shall be given thee, and thy Water shall be sure. There is a *Shall be* for your Instruction, They shall be all taught of God. There is a *Shall-be* for your Justification. His Name shall be called, The Lord our Righteousness. There is a
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Shall-be for your Salvation from Sin and Wrath, *His Name* shall be called JESUS, because he saves his People from their sins; even Jesus, which delivers from the Wrath to come. There is a *Shall-be* for your happy Death; Death shall be swallowed up in Victory. There is a *Shall-be* for a happy Welcome at the Day of Judgment. *They* shall be mine, in the Day that I make up my Jewels. There is a *Shall-be* for a happy Eternity, And so we shall be ever with the Lord. What think ye of all these Words and *Shall-be's*? Is there any Faith here, saying. Amen, so let it be, so shall it be? What think ye of his *Verily's*: We cannot go through these, to tell you how oft he hath confirmed his Words with a *Verily*, verily, I say unto you: Many a wrathful *Verily* against his Enemies, that think nothing of him; many a loving *Verily* towards his People, that think much of him. O, do you esteem them all to be the Truth, and that verily it is and shall be as he hath said? What think ye of his dying Words, as when he said upon the Crois, *It is finished*? What think ye of his living Words, *I am he that was dead, and am alive, and behold I live for evermore*? O what think ye of his Words? Cannot your Heart say, Lord to whom shall I go? thou hast the Words of eternal Life; O what think ye of him? (6.) What think ye of his Works? even his Works of Creation, what think ye of these? For by him all Things were made that were made, and without him was nothing made, John i. 3. O when you behold the Heavens, the Work of his Hands, the Moon and the Stars, which he hath ordained, may you not say, *What is Man that thou art mindful of him?* &c. What think ye of his Works of Providence? For he upholds all Things by the Word of his Power, Heb. i. 3. If you wonder how he can raise your dead Bodies at the great Day, and sever your Dust from other Dust; may you not as well wonder, how he every Day raises up in your View innumerable Stalks of Corn out of the Dust, and gives to every Pickle of Seed his own Body? as the Apostle argues, 1 Cor. xv. 35. and downward. How will he raise the Believer's vile Body,

out of the filthy Dust, where it rots, and make it like his own glorious Bouy ? O Fools that we are, and slow of Heart to believe, how does he raise the beautiful Lillies out of the Dung ? *Solomon*, in all his Glory, is not comparable to one of these ; and all the World cannot make one of them to rise, without his powerful Providence. These Miracles of Providence are common every Day in your View, and so we think nothing of them ; but we might see the Power of Christ in them. If you wonder how it was possible for Christ to turn the Water into Wine, or multiply a few Loaves, and a few Fishes, as to feed so many Thousands ; we needed not wonder so much, if we but thought how his Providence is doing that every Year : The Water falls from the Clouds, and the Vine by his Order turns it unto Wine ; and by the Spawn of such Fishes, and the Grain of such Loaves, he is feeding Millions every Day, Wo's us, that we cannot think of him, and his Works as we ought ! Above all, what think ye of his Works of Grace, and redeeming Love ? All his other Works are as the Drop of a Bucket, in Comparison of this Ocean ; for herein we may see him appear in his own, and his Father's Pomp and Splendor, manifesting all the glorious Perfections of God, even his infinite Power, and Wisdom, Holiness, Justice, Mercy, Truth, Faithfulness, and all God's Attributes. I might here mention his Works of Grace for us, and his Works of Grace in us ; but it were endless to speak of the thousandth Part. His Work of Grace for us lies in his bringing in everlasting Righteousness, especially, if we speak of his good Works ; surely it is a good Work, that can fulfil the holy Precepts of that good Law which we have broken, and can answer the righteous Threatning of the just Law which we have incurred. Well, here is the Doing and Dying of the Son of God, for both these Ends, that Divine Holiness may be vindicate, and Justice satisfied, in the Way and Manner of our Salvation through him. The Law of God is a perfect Law, and exceeding broad ; but here is a Righteousness

ness as broad as it can be, so as to magnify the Law, and make it honourable: O what think ye of that good Work? His Work of Grace in us is also much to be thought of; and that lies mainly, I think, in his imputing that perfect Righteousness to us for our Justification, (which is indeed properly an Act of Grace upon us, *Rom. iii. 22.*) and implanting another Righteousness beside it for our Sanctification, which he carries on to Perfection. This internal Work of Grace may be begun with Sighs and Groans, advanced in Battles and Conflicts; but it will be compleated in Victory and Glory. But in this short Glance of his Works, what think ye of them? May ye not say, as *Psal. cxi. 3.* *His Work is honourable and glorious, and his Righteousness endures for ever:* And when you notice his Works, what think you of himself? (7.) What think ye of his Gospel, and the Terms of it? That Gospel, which we preach in his Name, wherein his Righteousness is revealed from Faith to Faith: If you think highly of him, you'll think highly of it, as the best News, and gladdest Tidings that ever you heard; *How beautiful upon the Mountains are the Feet of them, &c.* Some are ready to think the Gospel of Grace, and Salvation through Christ, is too good News to be true with Respect to them, as if it were not to be supposed that God will bestow so great Salvation so freely upon so great Sinners; not considering, that God in the Gospel aims not at our Glory chiefly, but at the Declaration of his own Glory, and the magnifying of his own free Grace; and that therefore we ought to take freely what he gives freely: It is a Manifestation of free Grace, sovereign Grace, which is neither hindred by our Evil, nor furthered by our Good, *Rom. iii. 24.* and regards neither our Worthiness to deserve it, nor our Unworthiness to impede it, *Rom. ix. 15.* Hence *Luther* alledged, That Mens Minds were so occupied with fantastical Imaginations of their own Works, that the glad Tidings of the Gospel will seem strange Matters to them: Men will be astonished at the Greatness of his Grace, as it is, *Jer.*

xxxiii. 8. 9. Many think of the Gospel, as if it were a *new Law*, wherein God stands upon some ealier Terms with us than in the Covenant of Works; thus confounding Law and Gospel, and making a Hotch-potch of both. Indeed, if we speak of Law-terms, upon which our Salvation stands, they are no easier than ever they were: A perfect Righteousness is the only Condition of Salvation; and we not having that in our selves, the Gospel offers it in Christ, and there is the Ground of our eternal Salvation: But if we speak of Gospel-terms, we need not say, You must come up to them; but rather, *Come down, Zaccheus; for this Day is Salvation come to thy House*: Salvation is come to you, and offered freely to you, without Money and without Price; come down and take it. And indeed Faith, which belongs to the Order and Method of God's applying the Gospel, is a Coming-down from all our legal Hopes of Salvation for something to be done by us, in order to our being obliged to another, even to Christ for all, *Isa.* lv. 1, 2, *Rev.* xxii. 17. Come down from the Sycomore-tree of your vain Hopes, and get all freely; that is the Gospel: What think ye of it? This is indeed a hard Saying to proud Flesh and Blood, which thinks rather they should go up, and do more for their Justification and Salvation, than come down, and be obliged to another to pay all their Law-debt completely. He will do all for you, or nothing: And, O Man, what think ye of him and his Gospel? But then, (8.) What think ye of his Service, and his Wages? When a Man is once brought in to the Gospel-terms, and understands them then, and not till then, does he come up to the Gospel-rule; for Faith works by Love, and Love is the fulfilling of the Law as a Rule, from Thankfulness to him that hath delivered from the Law as a Covenant. If you think his Service hard and uneasy, it seems you are not thinking much of Christ, but rather of the Law, which is a heavy Yoke, that neither we nor our Fathers were able to bear: But Christ's Yoke is easy, and his Burden light, *Mat.* xi. 29, 30. because in this Service the Man hath no Law debt to pay, for Christ hath

hath done that to his Hand, but only a Love-debt, *If you love me, keep my Commandments*; and thus, *His Commandments are not grievous*: Here Grace is all and all, both of the Service and Wages. Grace says, *Up and be doing, Man, in my Strength; for the greatest Work is done to your Hand, and now my Grace shall be sufficient for thee*. Grace says also, *Behold a Crown of Glory, a Reward of Grace awaiting you, after ye have fought the good Fight of Faith; therefore have an Eye to this Recompence of Reward*. Death is the proper Wages of Sin, and it is just Debt; but Grace's Wages is free, *The Gift of God is eternal Life, through Jesus Christ our Lord*; that is, There is here no Promise of Life upon our Doing, but a Promise of Grace to do, and of Glory to crown our Doing, and of both Grace and Glory as the Reward of Christ's doing all; and therefore, what think ye of him and his Service? (9.) What think ye of his Livery? If you would answer this Question, *What think ye of Christ?* I would ask, What wear ye of Christ? The Raiment of his Righteousness, and the Garment of his Grace, so as to be all glorious within and without, like the King's Daughter, will be precious to you. If you be clothed with the Scarlet robe of his Blood and Righteousness, by which you are perfectly righteous before God, then to be sure you'll think it very indecent for you to be clothed with nasty Apparel before Men. If a poor Maid be married to a rich King, and yet go abroad like a Beggar in filthy Rags, would not every Body cry, Shame on her, that, having such a Husband should discredit him and her self? If you be married to Christ, and think much of your Husband and his Righteousness, surely you'll think it becoming to wear his Livery, and not go abroad with foul Mouths and filthy Hands, like the rest of the World, to the Dishonour of your Lord. (10.) What think ye of his Love, and the Reason of it? Who can understand the Height, and Depth and Length of his Love? It is without all Dimension. And why does he love any of the lost

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Posterity of *Adam*? He tells us the Reason, *Deut.* vii, 7, 8. *He loved you, because he loved you.* Do you think he loves you for your Beauty, O black and ugly Sinner? Nay, he bodes his Love and Kindness upon you in the Gospel freely; not for your own Beauty's Sake, but for his own Name's Sake: And his Grace, Love, and Good-will, as releaved in the Gospel, is to be believed with Application to your self, for no other Reason but because it is his Will and Pleasure. His Love must make you beautiful, but cannot find you so. And if you cannot believe his Grace and Good-will to you, because you have no Beauty, you're but rejecting the Reason of his Love, despising the Freedom of his Grace, and standing upon the Terms of the Old Covenant of Works, slighting the Grace of the New Covenant: This is such a natural Disease to Mankind, that even Believers in Christ, when they are helped to perform Duty with any lively Frame, are ready to say, with *Leah*, *Jacob's* Wife, when she brought forth several Children to him, *Now my Husband will love me, because of my Fruitfulness*; so says the Believer, when he is helped to bring forth Fruit unto God, and finds his Spirit revived in Duty, his Soul strengthened, his Heart enlarged, and a great deal of Comfort there, O now, says he, *my Husband will love me, because of my Fruitfulness*: But what comes of it? the Person having such a legal Sett, the Lord, to correct it, takes away all Fruitfulness out of his View, in a Manner, and leaves him barren; O, says the Believer then, *where is my former sweet Hearing, and sweet Praying and Praising, and sweet Meditation?* Why, the Lord has cut off these, that he may cut off your legal Pride of being loved for your Beauty and Fruitfulness, and that you may return to your first Husband, for then was it better with you than now; you must begin, Believer, where you began at first, and think of his loving you merely because he loves you. They that build their conjugal Comfort only, or mainly, upon their Righteousness of Sanctification, and so secretly hanker after the

the Law, will find their Souls very unsettled, even up and down with their changeable Frame. But again, (11.) I might ask, What think ye of his Loveliness? O. Is he *white and ruddy* in your View? O see how the Spouse describes him, *Song v. 10.* and downward, in the Beauty of his Head, his Locks, his Eyes, and all and every Part of him; his Belly, or Bowels of Mercy: *His Mouth is most sweet*, says she. O the Words, the Smiles, the Kisses of his Mouth, his kindly Embraces! I have read of one *Agatho*, that was a Man so holy, that with a Kiss he cured One of his Leprosy; whether that be true or false, yet what I intend by telling it, is true, That such is the Virtue of Christ. that a Kiss of his Mouth, a Smile of his Countenance, will cure the Soul of spiritual Leprosy; yea, a Word of his Mouth will do it, *Now are you clean through the Word that I have spoken*, John xv. 3. Again, (12.) What think ye of his Favour and his Blessing? Surely, if you esteem him duly, you will think *his Favour is Life, and his Loving kindness better than Life*, and that *his Blessing only makes rich*. Especially, What think ye of these Blessings and Benefits that cannot be enjoyed by Feeling but by Faith, nor by Sight of Sense but by the Sight of Faith? *We walk by Faith, and not by Sight*, says the Apostle. But it is the Fault even of Believers, that they can hardly believe they have any more than they feel; and hence, when they are in the Darkness of Desertion, they think they have nothing, they have lost his Favour, because they do not feel it; they have lost his Righteousness, because they do not feel it: But remember, that when *Asaph* said, *Hath the Lord forgotten to be gracious? hath he in Anger shut up his tender Mercies?* he added, *This was my Infirmity*. You know, in a House where it is dark all Things are there that were before, tho' you see them not; so it is with you, Believer, tho' you be in Darkness, all is to the fore: Do you think all is gone, because you cannot see it? Well, you never walk by Faith, but by Feeling; nay, *he that walks in Darkness, and hath no Light, let him trust in the Name of*

*of the Lord, and flay himself upon his God. The Name of the Lord is to the fore, his God is to the fore, the Object of Faith is to the fore as much as ever, and the Just shall live by Faith. Will you not believe the Sun is in the Firmament where it was, because a Cloud hath come and intercepted the Light of its Beams? Why, says One, but my Misery is, when I'm in the dark Night, I fear it was all but Delusion that ever I met with, and that there was nothing real or saving in it. This I find is a common Thought among serious Souls; but all that I shall say to it, is by enlarging the former Similitude; ask a Man when it is dark Night, How do you know that ever you saw the natural Sun? it may be you was but dreaming, and deluding your self; it was nothing but a strong Imagination. Why, says the Man, I am sure I saw it, because my Eyes were dazled with the Light of it, and I was warmed with the Heat of it, and I saw to work by it, and by the Light of it I saw every Thing about me. So may you say, Believer; when a dark Night of Desertion or Temptation comes on, the Tempter suggests, *It may be all was but a Delusion*, Why, Man, were not your Eyes enlightned? was not your Heart warmed? did you not see to work, and went on in your Work joyfully, *the Joy of the Lord being your Strength*? and did you not see every Thing about you? You saw God in his Glory, you saw Sin in its Vileness, you saw Holiness in its Beauty, you saw the World in its Vanity, you saw the Creature in its Emptiness, Christ in his Fulness, you saw your self in your Lothsomness; but now, when the Light is withdrawn, *What think ye of Christ*? Is there no Sun, because it is set to your View? Do you think it never shone upon you, because it is not now shining? What think ye of an absent Christ? do you think nothing of him because he is absent? Surely, Believer, that is not thought like a Believer; Sense is many Times denied you, that you may learn to believe more than you do. But, say you, *when he is not present with me, I cannot believe*. I shall tell you my Mind*

Mind here, There is a *powerful* Presence necessary to Believing : but there is a *sensible* Presence, that is not necessary to it, but rather usually comes in upon the Back of Faith. Now that powerful Presence of God, that is necessary to believing, does open up the Object of Faith, and draw out the Soul to the Embraces thereof : Hence, when a Man begins to think upon the proper Object of Faith, namely, Christ's Righteousness, God's Promise, the Truth of God, the Blood of Christ ; Power is sometimes insensibly exerted, not by any outward open Violence upon the Man, but by an inward, secret and sweet Inchantment, as it were : Ere ever he is aware, and before ever he knows that it is divine Power that is doing the Work, he finds the Object of Faith, that he is thinking upon, making Room for itself in his Heart, and drawing out his Soul as it were insensibly to it ; and thereupon comes in sensible Presence on the Back of that, *Eph. i. 13. After ye believed, ye were sealed.* Now, if you say, You cannot believe without his powerful Presence, that is true ; Divine Power must be exerted to every Act of Faith, but then this Power does ordinarily put forth itself insensibly and unawares, while we are thinking on, or viewing the Object of Faith, *Psal. xxxix. 3. While I was musing, the Fire burned.* The Spirit of God clears the Object of Faith, that being viewed and applied, the Heart is set on Fire with it ; there is his powerful Presence ushering in the sensible Presence. But if you say, You cannot believe till you have his sensible Presence ; that is to make Sense the Foundation of your Faith, and not the Word of God, or the Christ of God : Therefore, in order to believe, let not your Question be first, What find you in your self ? but rather, *What think ye of Christ ?* You'll find none of the sweet Effects of Faith, till you think on Christ the Object of it. Again, (13.) What think ye of his invisible Glories ? *Faith is the Evidence of Things not seen.* Faith sees not the Things that are seen and felt ; sensible Enjoyments, for Example, are not the Object of Faith, but Sense : But Faith sees the Things
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that can neither be seen nor felt ; it believes contrary to Sense, yea, Things impossible to Nature, and incredible to carnal Reason, considering only the Power of God, that speaks in the Word, as you see in the Faith of *Abraham*. The greatest Glory of Christ is invisible and incredible to Nature ; therefore we do not think much of him, if our Faith does not terminate on Things not seen. Again, (14.) What think ye of his Tabernacles and Ordinances ? Surely, if you think much of Christ, his Tabernacles will be amiable to you. The Slighter of his Ordinances is a Slighter of Christ, a Slighter of Prayer is a Slighter of Christ, a Slighter of the Word is a Slighter of Christ : *He that despises you, despises me, &c.* Again, (15.) What think ye of his Cause and Interest, such as the much forgotten Reformation-work in *Scotland*, which our Fore-fathers established by solemn National Covenants ? If, the more it is forgotten among Ministers and People, the more nearly it lies to your Heart, and the more you long for its Reviving, it were an Evidence you think something of Christ, when others think little of him. But O, if the Generation thought more of Christ, there would be more Zeal for his Interest, Honour, and publick Reformation-work ! And perhaps the Confusions of our Day, the heavy Bondage we are complaining of through the Land, will never cease to grow to a Height of terrible Wrath, till we be brought to a Sense of our Defection, and a humble Confession and Reformation. Further, (16.) What think ye of his Cross, and of his Crown ? Is his Cross your Crown ? Surely they think much of Christ, that can say with *Paul*, *God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of the Lord Jesus Christ*. *Moses* thought his Cross better than a Crown, esteeming the Reproach of Christ greater Riches than all the Treasures of Egypt. They that think much of Christ, must resolve upon it, that the World will not think much of them, but that they will be crossed, reproached, and nicknamed ; but if Christ was nicknamed for us, and endured the Contradiction of Sin-

ners against himself, we may well bear a Reproach for him, especially when he hath said, *If ye be reproached for the Name of Christ, happy are ye; for the Spirit of Glory and of God resteth on you: On their Part he is evil spoken of, but on your Part he is glorified*; his Cross makes Way for his Crown, and in the mean Time his Sweetness swallows up all the Bitterness thereof. (17.) What think ye of his Friends? If you think highly of him, surely his Friends and Followers will be esteemed as *the excellent Ones of the Earth*, and his Foes will be disesteemed by you; and therefore, (18.) What think ye of his Enemies? Tho' they were appearing in never so much wordly Pomp, you'll think very little of them, if you know them to be his Enemies. *O my soul, come not thou into their secret; to their Assembly, mine Honour, be thou not united.* What think ye of his Enemies within you? When you find these like Thorns in the Flesh, like Splinters run into the Flesh, does it not make you, with *Paul, to beseech the Lord thrice, yea, to pray thrice, and thrice, and a hundred Times thrice, with Sighs and Groans, to be freed from them?* What think ye of his Enemies about you? I mean, the World and the Lusts thereof, the Lusts of the Flesh, the Lusts of the Eye, and the Pride of Life. I have read a pretty Story, which I reckon useful no other Way than for the *Moral* of it, how an Angel and an *Hermite* should have been travelling together: When first they went by a dead Carcase, the *Hermite* stoppt his Nose, and the Angel smiled; and, after that, they went by a wanton Strumpet proudly dress'd, at which the *Hermite* smiled, and the Angel stoppt his Nose. The *Moral* shews us, that in the Sight of God and Angels, no Carrion is so noisom as Pride is. But the more highly that any think of Christ, surely the more humble they are, and Pride will accordingly be hid from their Eyes. Again, (19.) What think ye of the World's Thoughts of Christ? If you think highly of him, you'll think wonder why the World think so little of him. O strange, that all the World are not

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aken up with him. (20.) What think ye of your own Thoughts of him? Surely, if you think duly of him, you'll think you have but very poor Thoughts of him, you'll think that you cannot think enough of him. These are some probatory Questions, by which you may take your own Heart to Task before the Lord.

But I cannot stand to enlarge these Things; and I must own the thousandth Part is not said that might be spoken from this Text; for as the whole Scripture does testify of Christ, either directly or indirectly, so I might go through all the Scripture, and ask what ye think of Christ, in a Suitableness to what is said of him, in this or that Place of Scripture.

This Doctrine might again be applied by Way of Lamentation over all Christ-Despisers, who either stand upon a legal Bottom, trusting in themselves, and their own Righteousness; or who slight Christ and his Ordinances, not loving the Place where his Honour dwells; who delay and postpone their Closing with him, giving away the Prime and Virginity of their Affections to the World, prostituting their precious Souls to their Lusts and the ignoble Things of Time; who sit down satisfied and content without Christ, never miss him, nor feel a Want of him, nor seek after Union and Communion with him. O whence is it, that you despise Christ at this Rate! Alas, it is through Ignorance and Unbelief, that you see no Form or Comeliness in Christ, wherefore he should be desired; and the God of this World hath blinded your Minds who believe not, lest the Light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the Image of God, should shine into them. Do you consider what a miserable Case you are in, while you despise and think so little of Christ? You are in imminent Danger of temporal Judgments; for God, in his holy Providence, may resent the Injuries done to his Son, he may leave your House desolate. You are exposed to spiritual Judgments, such as that, *Isa. vi. 10.* and to eternal Wrath, even everlasting Destruction from his Presence; *He that believes not shall be damned.*

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Now, Let me offer a Word of Exhortation. O seek the Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation in the Knowledge of Christ may be sent, that, beholding his Glory, your Thoughts concerning Christ may be changed; and you may be brought to esteem him, and to go home with the Rose of *Sharon* in your Bosom, Christ in your Heart. O, will you tell me, do you think it worth your While to take Christ, and embrace him before you go? If you say you cannot believe, you cannot repent, you cannot mourn for Sin, you cannot pray, you cannot obey; and so, because you have no Grace, no Strength to do any Thing, you are discouraged: I must tell you, Sinner: when you conceive Religion to be some great Difficulty above your Power, and thereupon are discouraged and damped, you do not think of Christ as you ought, but of your self, forsooth, as if you were the Fountain from whence these good Things should flow. The Law may and does discourage Sinners, yea, curses every Christless Sinner unto Hell; but the Gospel offers no Discouragement to Sinners, but all Encouragement. Perhaps you'll find us that are Ministers, sometimes going off from our most Gospel-Texts that we can choose; and when we explain Faith, we will tell you how many Things it includes, such as, the forsaking of all Sin, and the performing of all Duty, and studying universal Holiness: But whatever be the Fruits of Faith, which the Lord makes to grow out of it, yet Faith itself is a great Mystery; And whatever you hear us say, that leads you off from this Question, *What think ye of Christ?* suspect it. I'll tell you in the Lord's Name, That to believe imports no more than to take Christ for all; it is to think you have nothing, and can do nothing; but that he hath all, and can do all, and therefore you'll take him for all. You think you cannot believe: Well said, but what think ye of Christ? If you think to bring Faith out of your own Bowels, you think unworthily of Christ, who is the Author of Faith; and of his Father, who is the Giver of it. You think you cannot repent: True, but what think ye of Christ? If you

you think to bring Repentance out of your selves, you think unworthily of him, who is exalted, by the Right-Hand of God, to give Repentance. You think you cannot do this, or that Duty you are called to ; But what think ye of Christ ? If you sit poring on your self, and your own Abilities, never a good Turn will you do : Nay, you think unworthily of Christ, who hath said, *Without me ye can do nothing*, but by me strengthning you, ye can do all Things. You are discouraged, because you think you have not this Thing in your self, or that Thing in your self : But that is Unbelief, Man ; for Faith lies in thinking, what am I in Christ ? *Isa. xlv. 24. Surely shall one say* (and they shall not only say it with their Mouth verbally, but think it, in their Heart believingly) *In the Lord have I Righteousness and Strength* : And because, by the Mouth of two or three Witnesses, every Word is confirmed, there are three *In the Lords* in that one Chapter, *v. 17. Israel shall be saved in the Lord, with an everlasting Salvation* ; *v. last, In the Lord shall all the Seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory* ; and in this *24 v. In the Lord have I Righteousness and strength*. And if you be once brought to this believing Thought, *In the Lord have I Righteousness*, in the Lord have I Strength, in the Lord I have Salvation, in the Lord I have all, then you'll find your Work easy, and all going right. Now, you that cannot be brought to think much of Christ. O pray God, if perhaps the Thoughts of your Heart may be forgiven you ; and whereas you think nothing of him now, O consider what you will think of him in a Day of Challenges, when Conscience awakens ; in a Day of Desolation, *Isa. x. in the Day of Death, in the Day of Judgment*. What will you think of him, when you see him mounting the Tribunal, and when pronouncing the fearful Sentence, *Depart from me ye cursed* ? Surely you must have dreadful Thoughts of him then, if you cannot be brought to think highly of him now ; now, when he is not come to destroy Mens Lives, but to save. But you, Believer, that now think highly of him, what-

whatever great Thoughts you have of Christ now, yet what will you think of him in that Day, when he who is your Life shall appear, and ye shall appear with him in Glory? O, what will ye think of him, when he pronounces the Sentence of Absolution, *Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you?* O, what will ye think of his Palace, his Attendants, his Throne, Crown and Glory?

I would offer an Advice to you that think much of Christ, and have a high Esteem of him. *First*, That you would evidence your Esteem of him; and that, *1st*, By the *Degrees* of it, so as to esteem him above all Things else, above all your Relations, *Mat. x. 37. He that loveth Father or Mother more than me, is not worthy of me.* Our Love to them must be Hatred, when it comes to compete with Christ: *If any Man come after me, and hate not Father and Mother, he is not worthy of me.* Above all worldly Advantages, yea, above Life, *Rev. xxi. 11. They loved not their Lives to the Death;* their Pangs of Love were stronger than the Pangs of Death. *2dly*, By the *Effects* of it, such as, (1.) Desire of Converse: If you think much of Christ, you'll desire his Company in all Ordinances; you'll seek him in the Temple, &c. (2.) Intertaining no Rival, but saying, *What have I to do any more with Idols?* giving up with all other Lovers. (3.) Sympathy, grieving at these Things that are grievous to him. (4.) Preserving his Memory, living upon him: Like the Woman that drank the Powder of her dead Husband's Body, mingled with her daily Drink; so should ye, by Faith, daily eat the Flesh, and drink the Blood of the Son of God. A *second* Advice is, That you would do all that you can, to make others think as much of him as you do; and that, 1. By commending him, and telling others of his Beauty, that they may admire him. See the Practice of the Spouse for this, *Song v.* and what Influence it had upon the Daughters of *Jerusalem* their beginning to think much of him, and seek after him also, *Song vi. 1.* O then commend him to your Families, your Children and your Neighbours.

2. By

2. By adorning his Gospel, and walking worthy of him, and wearing his Livery. It is a Master's Honour and Credit to have a good Servant, and well arrayed; they think much of the Master that hath such a Servant. And how does it proclaim the Praises of Christ, when they that profess him are eminent for Piety? 1 Pet. ii. 9. In a Word, *Let your Light so shine before Men, that others, seeing your good Works, may glorify God, and think much of Christ.* O let your Hearts be still thinking of him, your Life praising, and your Tongue speaking of him. Here is a Fountain for spiritual Discourse: If you have Opportunity of conversing with any, concerning the great Solemnity you have been Witnesses to here; or if any ask you, Where was such or such a Minister's Text? here is a fair Occasion for spiritual Converse, for you cannot in a Manner tell them this Text, without asking them a Question, *What think ye of Christ?*

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